Women, equality and education in Singapore from the 19th century to the present day

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WOMEN, EQUALITY AND EDUCATION IN SINGAPORE
FROM THE 19TH CENTURY TO THE PRESENT DAY

Submitted by

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Dedicated to:

All forward-looking Singapore women who are assertive, independent and progressive and who believe in, and strive for, a society in which they are to be recognised and acknowledged as equal partners in all spheres of its development and growth, be it educational, economic, social or political. So stand up and be counted!

"There is one major biological difference between men and women about which no one would argue - sexually men and women have different functions. However, this one difference has led to the idea that, not only are the bodies different, but the personalities and roles in life of the two sexes are different too. So different in fact that this has led to various myths about men and women:

Myth No.1 - Females are passive and unaggressive. They care for and support others. They are domestic and dependent. They are easily upset and emotional, given to crying.

Myth No.2 - Males are active and aggressive, independent and adventurous. They can cope with the world. They are logical and unemotional. They ought to be able to dominate women. They are tough, violent, ambitious, ruthless.

Myth No.3 - If males don't behave in a masculine way and females in a feminine way, there is something wrong with them.

People are brought up to believe that these myths are true. If men and women do act out these beliefs, they damage not only themselves but each other. Men often fail to live up to what they think is expected of them. Women have so little expected of them that they rarely reach their full capacities".

Cited from Adams, C. and Laurikietis, R. The Gender Trap (Book 1). Virago Ltd., London. 1976. p.19.

"Schools are, at least partly, responsible for the beliefs common amongst girls that training is unimportant, their jobs are unessential and their husbands are financially responsible for them. Poor job opportunities, low pay and discrimination at work both cause and reflect discrimination at school.

The education system is, we believe, creating discriminatory attitudes and low expectations in new generations of children".

From the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL). Women's Rights. November 1973.

Although the NCCL findings are about Britain, they could equally well reflect the attitudes and practices of the Singapore educational system 166 years ago and today.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PAP = People's Action Party (Singapore)
DBS = Development Bank of Singapore
EDB = Economic Development Board (Singapore)
GNP = Gross National Product
GDP = Gross Domestic Product
NTUC = National Trades Union Congress (Singapore)
JTC = Jurong Town Corporation (Singapore)
CPF = Central Provident Fund (Singapore)
E.I.Co. = East India Company
LMS = London Missionary Society
ABCFM = American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions
MOE = Ministry of Education (Singapore)
MOL = Ministry of Labour (Singapore)
NES = New Education System (Singapore)
PSLE = Primary Six Leaving Examinations
GCE = General Certificate of Education
CSE = Certificate of Secondary Education (Singapore)
NUS = National University of Singapore
IE = Institute of Education, Singapore
STU = Singapore Teachers' Union
CEC = Central Executive Committee of People's Action Party
SCWO = Singapore Council of Women's Organisations
SFPPB = Singapore Family Planning and Population Board
HDB = Housing and Development Board (Singapore)
TUC = Trades Union Congress (United Kingdom)
DE = Department of Employment (United Kingdom)
BEST = Basic Education for Skills Training
EOC = Equal Opportunities Commission (United Kingdom)
FIAC = Flander's Interactional Analysis Categories
CDIS = Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore
NESPE = New English Series for Primary Education
PEP = Primary English Programme
EEC = European Economic Community
ILO = International Labour Organisation
LEA = Local Education Authority (United Kingdom)
SSLCP = Straits Settlements Legislative Council Proceedings
FCP = Federal Council Proceedings
SLC = Singapore Legislative Council
MOC = Ministry of Culture (Singapore)

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Abbreviations used in Figures 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3

EL = English Language
EL1 = English as a First Language
EL2 = English as a Second Language
CL = Chinese Language
CL1 = Chinese as a First Language
CL2 = Chinese as a Second Language
CL3 = Chinese as a Lower Second Language
ML = Malay Language
ML1 = Malay as a First Language
ML2 = Malay as a Second Language
ML3 = Malay as a Lower Second Language
TL = Tamil Language
TL1 = Tamil as a First Language
TL2 = Tamil as a Second Language
TL3 = Tamil as a Lower Second Language
PU = Pre-University
L1 = First Language
L2 = Second Language
L3 = Lower Second Language
P = Primary
S = Secondary
VITB = Vocational and Industrial Training Board
N = Normal course)
E = Extended course) Primary School
M = Monolingual course)
PSLE = Primary Six Leaving Examinations
CSE = Certificate of Secondary Education
S = Special course)
N = Normal (Express) course) Secondary School
O = Ordinary (Normal) course)

ABSTRACT

In 1984 females represented 49.8% of the total population of Singapore, 48.3% of the total school population and 36.3% of the total labour force. Women's contribution to the economic development and political stability of industrialised Singapore is unquestionable, yet, they do not enjoy educational, economic, political or religious parity with men.

This research comprises three parts: the first, consisting of Chapters 2 and 3 surveys the historical and educational developments of Singapore and women's place in these two areas; the second part, Chapters 4, 5 and 6, is an historical analysis of the changing conditions of Singapore women constitutionally, educationally and politically while histories, ethnographies and explanations make up Chapters 7 and 8, the third part.

Chapter 1, the introduction, summarizes the main areas to be investigated in this research. Chapter 2 traces the historical and economic developments of Singapore and Chapter 3 reviews the diverse educational developments from 1819 to the present day. Chapter 4 investigates the roles and statuses of Chinese, Malay and Indian women in the past and today. Chapter 5 discusses the legal, political and educational changes and their effects on Singapore women. Sex discrimination and sex-role stereotyping in employment and in the educational

system are investigated in Chapters 6 and 7. Ethnographic classroom observations and a survey of textbooks, neither approach having been attempted before in Singapore, were carried out in Chapter 7.

Extracts from personal reflections on the situations of women in the home, in the educational system, in employment and in society, in the past and today, are presented in Chapter 8. Chapter 9 draws together the conclusions and makes recommendations for more equitable practices in the educational, political, economic fields and in the home environment with the hope of establishing, if possible, a more equal society in the future.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Definition of the term 'Equality'

Equality is a word with "both a venerable ancestry and a prodigious burden of inherited meanings" (Lakoff (1), p.12). In classical times, it represented the striving after legal justice for all. Early Greek and Roman laws in principle accorded protection to all and meted out equal justice to all offenders, but in practice inequalities of rank and wealth were a reality. Equal justice in philosophic terms was first expressed by the Stoic philosophers and egalitarian ideals were also expressed in prophetic Judaism and in the ethics of Christianity (1).

The Western cultural tradition deriving from these sources is manifested in the 20th century by the works of Tawney (2). Tawney's concept of equality, quoted below, probably commands the widest assent among British egalitarians:

> Few men have been more acutely sensitive than Mill to the importance of encouraging the widest possible diversities of mind and taste. In arguing that 'the best state for human nature is that which, while no one is poor, no one desires to be richer', and urging that social policy should be directed to increasing equality, he did not intend to convey that it should suppress varieties of individual genius and character, but that it was only in a society marked by a large measure of economic equality that such varieties were likely to find their full expression and due meed of appreciation.
>
> (Tawney (2), p.48)

While all men and women differ profoundly in capacity, as Tawney (2) points out, they are entitled as human beings to equal treatment and society will prosper best if they are enabled to make the best of their powers. The basic theme of Tawney's work Equality (2) is the view he holds regarding equality of opportunity which should mean,

> ..not only that what are commonly regarded as the prizes of life should be open to all, but that none should be subjected to arbitrary penalties; nor that exceptional men (sic) should be free to express their exceptional powers, but that common men (sic) should be free to make the most of their common humanity.
>
> (Tawney (2), p.108)

While his principle of equality does not exclude certain inequalities, it does reject arbitrary or unjustified inequality. Inequalities of power are justifiable when they are applied to a social purpose approved by the community and not more extensive than that purpose requires and revocable if the terms exceed the purpose. The elimination of unjustified inequality can mean at least two different kinds of public policy. Firstly, in connection with political and employment rights, it may be thought that the proper role of the state is simply to remove arbitrary barriers such as laws, rules, conventions and practices. But, as will be shown, it is often thought insufficient simply to remove formal barriers. Instead, positive measures favouring special areas or groups of people are in this view thought necessary to compensate for the impact of past discrimination which may have contributed to the inability of such groups to compete on equal terms with more

privileged social groups.

Social inequality appears to be a worldwide phenomenon. In societies like the United Kingdom and Singapore where the principle of equality of opportunity is adhered to in the formal sense that the means for all, irrespective of sex, race or creed, to achieve their full potential are provided, greater inequalities than could be countenanced by Tawney (2) still exist. Schaar (3) and Tyler (4) argue that the principle of equal opportunity is essentially conservative because it only guarantees equality for all to enter the race, not to win it. However, some groups fall so far behind the starting line that they are never in the position of running the race at all and in this instance measures of positive discrimination may be required to bring them up to the starting line. Inequality in economic reward is generally seen as the most obvious of social inequalities. It is the contention of Gass (5) that "even if we postulate an optimum equality of income, there would still remain the meritocratic question of recruitment of individuals into the leadership roles of society" (Gass (5), p.8). The career open to talents is a career entered by competitive examination (6). O'Neill (6) argues that the selection procedures devised to admit, employ and promote on 'non-discriminating' criteria have generally produced results which were highly unequal in two respects. Firstly, they have produced societies "whose members were extremely unequal in educational and occupational attainment

whether measured by competence, credentials, income or status" and secondly, these selection procedures "frequently lead to disproportionate success in some social groups and correspondingly disproportionate failure in others" (O'Neill, p.179).

Parker (7) points out that in industrial societies, "individual living standards are largely determined by economic power or, more precisely, by a man's (sic) relation to the labour and capital market" (Parker (7), p.146). Different rewards are given to various jobs and occupations and this trend reflects market forces rather than political decisions about needs (7). In arguing for the concept of citizenship which would incorporate the social rights of all men and women, Parker (7) argues that individual living standards should be protected by political decisions which guarantee an agreed level of medical or social care, education and cash, regardless of individual bargaining power. In practice, she feels that selectivity policies are necessary and justifiable provided that the provision is made as of right to those who are in need of such provision. One example of this is positive discrimination in education which can be, as Parker (7) points out, an indispensable means to the realisation of citizenship rights.

Positive discrimination distinguishes people for special treatment in order to compensate for disadvantages inherent in their physical environment or life histories.

In educational terms, its main aim is to ensure greater equality of outcome by treating unequal needs unequally. Positive discrimination was first introduced in the United States. In 1964, the Commissioner of Education was mandated under the Civil Rights Act 1964 to assess the lack of equality of educational opportunity among racial and other groups (8). The Coleman Report, published as a result of the survey showed, rather unexpectedly, that educatioanl facilities per pupil did not vary and postulated that the lower performance of black pupils was due largely to 'inferior' home background (8). Despite wide criticism of the Report in the United States, for example by Bowles (9), who argues that,

> the burden of achieving equality of educational opportunity should not, and cannot, be borne by the educational system alone.... it depends also to a very large degree, upon what we do elsewhere in the economy, in the polity and in the society as a whole
>
> (Bowles (9), p.95),

the survey resulted in the initiation of positive compensatory education through such programmes as Project Headstart. In the United Kingdom, positive discrimination was introduced in 1968 as a result of the 1967 Plowden Report. Educational Priority Areas were set up in which community schools were established, additional funding and personnel provided, parental involvement encouraged and community-oriented curricula implemented in order to help those pupils from 'inferior' home background (10).

Positive discrimination while a desirable end, is

not, in the opinion of the author, feasible at the present moment in the Singapore context. Singapore at present lacks the expertise, financial resources and qualified personnel to implement successful compensatory programmes. Nevertheless, all these problems could be overcome if the political will was there. But a society that flourishes on meritocracy and elitism and is founded on a deep-rooted patriarchal system of familial and societal obligations will require many years of consciousness raising even to accept the principle of positive discrimination, let alone implement it. The all-male Singapore Cabinet and most Singapore women and men have yet to come to terms with the Western concept of equality endorsed by Tawney (2) and Parker (7). The principle of equal rights is embedded in the Singapore constitution and, indeed, is commemorated in the state flag of 1959: the top, red half of the flag symbolises "universal brotherhood (sic) and equality of man (sic)" and the five stars stand respectively for "democracy, peace, progress, justice and equality" (MOC, (11). p.21). Equality in this context, however, may be taken to mean firstly, equality before the law, and secondly, equality of opportunity of the type discussed by Schaar (3) and Tyler (4). In 1955, the All-Party Committee in Singapore had recommended equal educational opportunity to both boys and girls in the sense that access to secondary education was to be made on the basis of individual ability and aptitude (See Chapter 3, Section 3.2.2). This was essentially a meritocratic version of equality and took no

account of the absurdity of treating unequals equally.

The People's Action Party (PAP) first came into power in 1959. It has won every general election since then and its latest term of office ends in 1989. Meritocracy and elitism are the prime ideals of this government. They have pervaded the fabric of society and are most apparent in the fields of employment and education. The application of the principle of equality of opportunity in the educational system has led to the creation of a segmented society where the brightest and most capable, those with the highest IQs and credentials, have benefitted most in terms of educational facilities, upward social mobility, financial rewards including fringe benefits in employment as well as in social recognition. Whether these arrangements will change radically in the near future depends on the direction taken by the educational service, whether it is towards even greater meritocracy or towards more egalitarian ends, and perhaps more fundamentally, on how less favoured groups in Singapore society, amongst whom women may be included, come to demand more forcefully the removal of those arbitrary barriers which militate against equal development.

It is the contention of this thesis that Singapore society as a whole will benefit from the equal treatment, in Tawney's (2) sense, of all members of society so that all are enabled to make the best use of their capacities, and all feel they are contributing, to the best of their abilities, to the well being of society as a whole.

1.2 Women, Development and Change

A review of the history of recent political and social changes that have taken place in the countries of Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East, for example, reveals a common trend in their governments' attitudes to women's affairs. As McCormack (12) points out, women's grievances have been part of the revolutionary spirit; women feature prominently among the guerilla fighters, in, for example, Nicaragua and the Philippines, and political manifestos in Singapore, Malaysia and India, for example, have included women's aspirations, yet the feminist momentum has seldom been upheld. Women's dedication, courage and contributions to nationalist causes in China, India, Algeria and elsewhere, have drawn praises from the new regimes in these countries which have reaffirmed their commitment to full liberation in theory if not always in practice. Likewise, in Singapore, the sacrifice and support of many women who secretly worked in the underground anti-Japanese movements and openly in the anti-Colonial struggle (See Chapter 4, Section 4.6), were also noted and honoured by the British authorities in the first case and the PAP Government (13) in the second case. However, despite women's dedication and self-sacrifice worldwide in the cause of bringing about a better world for everyone, only minimal reforms have been introduced which actually benefit women and these only when they coincide with the political and economic goals of new governments. The traditional sexual divisions of labour in the household,

factory and field continue to thrive with only slight modifications, and wage and educational differentials continue to persist. Although more occupations are open to women, and the school curriculum offers new experiences and opportunities to girl pupils, the special needs and aspirations of women slip down on national agendas, are considered less significant or urgent and in general are shelved for indefinite periods (12).

Davin (14), Stacey (15) and Stiehm (16) point to the fact that militant Third World women of China and Algeria, for example, who expect more from their new regimes, may be surprised and disappointed by their broken promises but McCormack (12) stresses that the scenario is typical of women elsewhere. She cites the Soviet Union, for example, where the Marxist ideology emphasises social justice and denounces the decadent bourgeois lifestyles but in practice, as Scott (17) and Jancar (18) confirm, equality for women has turned out to be selective and conditional - only practical if it blended with other objectives and only if it did not interfere with the important work of male elites. Political leaders almost everywhere at some time have pledged equality for women, but it has been achieved nowhere (12). Sexual inequality in the educational, social, political and economic spheres is not confined to one culture or society but persists throughout the world, in both developed and developing countries.

The casual visitor to Singapore is generally

impressed by the outward status of women in the sprawling, capitalist island republic. Women dress smartly to go to work; they outnumber men in most banking establishments; they are able to converse in English or Mandarin and an increasing number are proficient in both these languages; they have freedom of movement and they enjoy full franchise as do Singapore men. Equal educational opportunities were accorded to both sexes in 1959 and attempts to raise women's status to that of men's were endorsed through legislation since 1961 with the passing of the Women's Charter (See Chapter 5, Section 5.2). What goes undetected is that Singapore women, like their sisters both in the more advanced Western and the less developed Eastern countries, experience the same unequal treatment and discriminatory practices both in the public domains of education, employment, politics, religion and society and in the private domain of the home.

1.3 The purpose and methods of this thesis

The purpose of this thesis is fourfold. Firstly, using a variety of approaches and sources, it provides a systematic account of the history of differences between women and men in Singapore. Secondly, it aims to explain the contradictions between the appearance of equality and apparent public commitment to it on the one hand, and, on the other, the reality of continuing differentiation. Thirdly, in providing such a systematic account of Singapore

women, the thesis provides a corroborative illustration of the general observations of Davin (14), Stacey (15), et al, cited earlier, that the promise of women's liberation through national liberation does not necessarily come to fruition; that is, unless there are specific policies aimed at women's rights, as well as national autonomy. Fourthly, and following on from the previous point, it is hoped and intended that the analysis presented in this thesis, which is eclectic in approach, may provide a basis from which ideas for future policy directions may spring.

The basic argument of this thesis is that women's roles in employment, education and the home cannot be treated in isolation from one another. As a result of this, the methodology of the thesis is necessarily eclectic. That is, it uses conventional historical approaches to outline the effects of the past on public policies towards the public and private roles of women. It draws on public statistics to illustrate the past and present experiences of Singapore women in employment and education. These are considered in the light of economic, sociological and educational theories about the factors influencing women's participation in these spheres. For reasons, referred to later in this chapter and discussed more fully in the relevant subsequent chapters, it has been considered necessary to enrich the historical and statistical sources by the use of participant observation in schools, interviews and oral history techniques.

1.4 Outline of the thesis

Since an understanding of the present can be assisted by knowledge of the past, Chapters 2, 3 and 4 are historical, dealing with Singapore in general and education and women in particular. Although throughout the 140 years of British rule in Singapore, attempts were made by the British administrators to encourage and expand the education system, the question foremost in the minds of feminists and advocates of equal opportunities for girls today is, for whom was education in this period primarily geared? The various missionary bodies and ethnic clans and associations also contributed to the development and growth of education in Singapore since the days of its foundation, but on which group of the population did they expend their energies and resources? A thorough investigation of the educational system that has prevailed from 1819 onwards to the eve of self-government in 1958, provides some answers to such questions. In the period prior to 1959, the education system was basically modelled on British lines and was concerned primarily with the education and advancement of boys. However, a change in educational policies was begun in 1959 when the locally elected government pledged itself to guaranteeing equal opportunities for all Singaporeans, regardless of race, creed and sex (19). It is undeniable that equal opportunities for females were accorded in the form of unbiased admission to schools and junior colleges and to tertiary institutions, but successive reports by technical colleges and the university in particular, have

revealed a disproportionate number of girls particularly in technical colleges and their concentration in the Arts and Social Sciences in the university (See Chapter 5, Section 5.4). Despite the official government policy on education it would seem that girls at the present time are not taking those subjects which afford high status in a technological society. While Chapter 3 looks into the education systems of the past and present, part of Chapter 5 is an investigation of the policies of the present government and how they affect and shape the life chances of girls within the system.

The educational policies of the British and local administrators and the outlook of educationists of the 19th and 20th centuries have not been the only obstacles in the path of achieving a fair and equitable system for girls generally. Diverse cultural attitudes have also played their part. The population of modern Singapore is made up primarily of immigrants from the neighbouring countries of China, India, Indonesia and Malaysia. The overpowering influences of such traditional religio-cultural systems as Confucianism, Islam and Hinduism on the lives of men and women of the three major ethnic groups, that is, Chinese, Malays and Indians, are reflected in the socialisation of their daughters from an early age which encourages girls to play the roles of wife, mother and daughter-in-law and to lead a secluded life (20). These cultural attitudes, as documented in Chapter 4, made it dificult if not impossible

for girls to avail themselves of the opportunities for higher education or indeed for any form of edcuation during the greater part of Singapore's modern history.

In the last two decades, in particular, Singapore women have begun to enjoy privileges which were denied their mothers and grandmothers before them. Legislation like the Women's Charter, for instance, have helped to put them on a more equal footing with men and more avenues are open to women in the educational, legal, political and economic fields. These legal and social improvements are discussed in Chapter 5. Whether these changes have in reality placed them on a complete equal social, educational or economic footing with men needs to be investigated. An attempt to do so is carried out in Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

Chapter 6 focuses on the role of women in the world of employment where inequalities in opportunities, upward mobility and pay are most overt and visible. It is through an investigation of the types of occupations they hold, the wages they earn, the opportunities available to them in training, their general educational attainment and the disparities if any, in medical and other fringe benefits that may exist, that one can get a clearer picture of the economic situation that has prevailed for women both in the pre-industrial and industrial periods. A straightforward historical description can provide this clearer picture and, at one level, answer the kinds of questions posed on pages three and four of this chapter. But it is also

important to try to find the 'causes' of the historical patterns. To do this, we need also to consider the data provided in Chapter 6 in the light of economic and sociological theories of the labour market.

"The differential impact of economic growth for men and women is found primarily in the occupation-wage structure, in the opportunities for mobility, with education - access, length and type - serving as the intervening variable" (McCormack (12), p.24). Such sex differentiation and discrimination within the labour market can be the consequence of, for example, the existence of a dual or segmented labour market; the interests of women themselves towards employment; the interests of male employees towards the competition from their female colleagues and the role of trade unions in enforcing male interests (21); the attitudes and interests of employers in the employment of both or either sex and the effects stemming from the interests of the government in power in creating a labour force in response to its economic goals and projections (21).

To understand the reasons for the sex-related occupational differentiation in the labour market, it is the contention of Barron and Norris (22), that it is essential to consider both the sexual norms which define the place of men and women in the household and outside it, and the forces which operate in the labour market itself. The inferior position of women in the labour market, they claim, is the outcome of the stratification of the labour market

into a primary sector consisting of relatively well-rewarded and stable jobs with ample scope for advancement and a secondary sector made up primarily of lower paid and insecure occupations with little likelihood of upward mobility. This dualism is not confined to one firm or industry but cuts across firms, industries and industrial sectors (22). Barron and Norris (22) argue that in Britain men generally make up the primary sector while women generally fall into the secondary sector. History is an important factor in determining how the market is divided. Hakim (23) argues that in other societies with different historical or cultural backgrounds, the division may be based on gender, race, religion, urbanization or some combination of these factors.

In dual labour market theories, there is a complex mediating relationship between family, education and work. In classical labour market theories, differentiation is justified by reference to allegedly innate female characteristics which make them unsuitable for careers in the primary sector; investment in their training is a poor risk because of their supposedly higher commitment to family demands, their emotional and physical characteristics and the inappropriateness of their pre-labour market education. But Barron and Norris (22) turn this on its head, arguing that these characteristics are not innate 'objective' factors which necessarily determine the shape of the labour market. Instead they propose that workers in the secondary sector, seeing that they are unlikely anyway to gain access

to jobs with good prospects and high pay, take on the supposedly innate characteristics of workers in the secondary sector. It appears to such workers pointless to become educated in suitable subjects and fulfilment seems more likely elsewhere, such as in the family. Priority being given to family and work being dull or monotonous, such workers then exhibit high rates of turnover and absenteeism. The more this occurs, the greater the justification appears to be for the initial segmentation. In order to break this 'vicious circle', positive intervention, probably by the state, is necessary; not only in the banning of discrimination in pay and recruitment but also in education and training and the provision of childcare facilities. Examples of successful interventions of this type existed in war-time Britain and the United States and, for a brief period, in the late 1960s in Singapore as a means of counteracting the effects of national service in Singapore on industry (See Chapter 6).

One aspect of education - literacy - has been identified by Byrne (24), Spender (25), Stockard et al (26), Wong (27) and a host of women authors particularly in the West, as an agent of change. It is significant both for general development and the emancipation of women from the 'vicious circle'. There can be change without literacy but this will mean no serious commitment to industrialisation. Illiteracy, like poverty, is a drag on development (12) and, with Singapore forging ahead towards the industrial era of

advanced technology, the emphasis on literacy becomes more important, especially for women if they are to be able to master the skills and so participate more actively and effectively in the labour market. This, therefore, necessitates a survey in Chapter 7 of the present educational system in order to establish whether a fair and equitable system does prevail for pupils, both boys and girls, within the system. While the curriculum forms the basis of an equitable educational system, issues such as school practice, incorporating teacher-pupil relationship and the textbooks and learning materials used, also contribute to equality. Discrimination can take many forms and one of the most overt practices is the encouragement of sex-role stereotyping in employment among the teaching and non-teaching staff that make up the entire organisation of an educational institution. Although data-based research forms a large part of Chapter 7, these statistics only cover part of the scenario. To arrive at a more valid account of the pitfalls, if any, in school practice today, informal interviews were carried out with both teachers and pupils. These interviews together with the questionnaire distributed to secondary and junior college pupils were aimed primarily at establishing whether it is justifiable to claim that there is sexism in school practice and, if so, whether it is confined only to one sex of teachers or is the norm among both male and female teachers.

Historical accounts of the status and roles that Singapore women played in the last century have been

documented, for example, in academic papers and women's magazines. But they were written from the perspective of the various male or female authors and touched only on personal experiences of roles they played at home, treatment received as females within their culture or of the type of relationship they had with their spouses. A deeper understanding and appreciation of the position and multiple roles that modern women play in the home, in employment, in society and the effects of the educational system on their overall development in the past and at present, is attempted through the oral history technique applied in Chapter 8. To cite Thompson (28),

> ..oral evidence by transforming the 'objects' of study into 'subjects' makes for a history which is not just richer, more vivid and heart-rending, but truer.
>
> (Thompson (28), p.90)

Besides, a cross-section of participants from all walks of life can be called upon to give their views and opinions and this can result in an awareness of the past which is not just known, but personally felt (28). Such an historical exploration also illuminates the complex inter-relationships among family life, education, religion, race and employment posited by the dual labour market theorists and, in particular, by Hakim (23).

The findings of the thesis, gathered as a result of its historical, quantitative and qualititative analyses, about the complex inter-relationships of social practice,

education and employment are brought about together in the final chapter in order to provide a basis for new policy directions.

Since past events and developments have in no small measure, shaped the present, our understanding of the history of Singapore women cannot be independent of the history of Singapore itself. Though the foundation of modern Singapore dates back to slightly more than one and a half centuries ago, that span of time had been an eventful one which saw the meteoric rise, firstly, of the once insignificant fishing village to the main port of call for vessels worldwide which make their way to and from Asia and the Middle East and Europe, and secondly, the influx of immigrants from the neighbouring lands who today, form the nucleus of the republic's cosmopolitan population. That period also saw the progressive stages of constitutional development under British administration culminating in the relinquishing of British control of the colony through self-government in 1959 and the granting of independence in 1965. Thus a description in Chapter 2 of the historical development of Singapore together with an overview of the economic growth and development from 1819 to the present day, sets the stage for a more comprehensive understanding of the policies, problems and attitudes of succeeding governments and the effects of the changes that took place on the people of Singapore in general and the situations of women in particular.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SINGAPORE

2.1 Introduction

Modern Singapore dates from 1819 when it was founded by Sir Stamford Raffles of the East India Company (E.I.Co.). Its foundation is unique in that it was based on the initiative of Raffles alone despite almost universal opposition (1). Britain's legal sovereignity over Singapore was only acknowledged in 1824 when the E.I.Co. formally purchased control of the whole colony from the Sultan of Johore and the Temenggong of Johore, Chief of Singapore. In 1826, together with Malacca and Penang, the three colonies became known as the Straits Settlements.

For over a century, historians have treated her story as part of Malayan history while early attempts at writing a history of Singapore made little progress (1). Raffles' own manuscripts and papers covering the station's origins and early administration had unfortunately perished in a shipwreck in 1824. Besides, early administrators and writers were attracted to the political intervention of Britain in the Malay states from 1874 and academicians devoted their research into the history, customs and literature of the Malay states. Present day historians, too, have neglected the past. With the granting of independence in 1965, the new nation's attention was focussed upon creating national consciousness and striving

for future prosperity (1). However, concentration on the present and future by Singaporeans in their attempts to build up loyalties to the new state, is meaningless without reference to the past. Not only does the past shape the present but nation building as Turnbull (1) points out, "implies a need to establish an identity based upon the consciousness of the development of a country, as distinct from the interests of the individuals collected together in it" (Turnbull (1), p.xiv).

Thus a survey of Singapore's past, covering its foundation, early settlement, political and economic developments up to the present day, is attempted in this chapter. This chapter, therefore, serves as the starting point to a more comprehensive understanding of the complex multi-racial composition of the colony's population and its paradoxes and vicissitudes during the last 166 years of its growth and development.

2.2 Geographical setting and early beginnings

Singapore, an island republic in South-East Asia, lies at the crossroads between East Asia and the Western world. It is approximately 136.8 kilometres north of the Equator and situated between latitudes 1°09'N and 1°29'N and longitudes 103°38'E and 104°06'E. Singapore consists of the main island of Singapore and some 50 odd islets within its territorial waters. Together they make up a total area of 617.9 km^2. Thus Singapore is one of the smallest nations in

the world.

Singapore's immediate neighbours are Peninsula West Malaysia to the north, the Republic of Indonesia to the south and west, while to the east lies East Malaysia. A 1,056 metre causeway which carries a road and a railway links the island to Peninsula West Malaysia.

Owing to its proximity to the Equator, the climate is equatorial with a uniformly high daily average temperature of 26.6° C and relative humidity of 84.6%. No marked season prevails here. Rain falls all the year round but is most copious from November to January. More than one-third of the total land area, that is, 288.6 km^2 is classified as built-up area and this includes new industrial sites (2). The island has no natural resources and has to import most of its food. It also has to depend on its less developed neighbours for the supply of much of its energy.

The name 'Singapore' is derived from two Sanskrit words 'singa' and 'pura' meaning 'Lion City'; it was called 'Temasek' or 'Sea Town' in Malay because of its proximity to the sea. A long established but small fishing community, made up mainly of Malays and the Orang Laut of the Riau-Lingga Archipelago, had existed for centuries. The early history of Temasek is obscured by legend (3). An account of the origin of the island in the Malay Annals claims that its founder was Sri Tri Buana, a Sumatran prince (4). Attracted to the island by its glistening white sands, he spotted a lion upon landing with his followers, thus he named the

place 'Singapura'. From calculations, since dates are uncertain, it can be deduced that the date of the early foundation of the city by Sri Tri Buana was 1299 (3). However, about 1400, the city of Temasek which had flourished with great numbers of foreigners present, was overrun and destroyed by a powerful Hindu empire known as Majapahit from Java.

2.3 Settlement and political development of Singapore from 1819 to the present day

2.3.1 The Portuguese and the Dutch in South-East Asia

The Portuguese were one of the earliest European powers to penetrate the unknown Eastern parts of the world. They were attracted to the natural wealth in this region and as early as the 16th century, during their first voyages to the East, they had discovered the 'great ruins' of Temasek (3). When the English first set foot on the island in 1819, they re-discovered these ruins. Among the ruins were found Chinese coins of the 10th and 11th centuries, a pair of flexible gold bracelets and other ornaments which all point to the fact that the island had been occupied and known to its neighbours long before the visit of Sri Tri Buana in 1299.

As early as 1498, the great Portuguese naval commander Vasco da Gama had arrived in Calicut, on the west coast of India. Calicut soon became the base, firstly, for future Portuguese advance to South-East Asia and China, and,

secondly, for control of the flow of eastern goods to Europe from the Muslim-controlled routes through the Middle East to the Portuguese-controlled long sea-route round the Cape of Good Hope (5). The Malay kingdom of Malacca founded by Parameswara, a Sumatran prince, in the 14th century had grown into a great port and centre of Islam in the Eastern Archipelago by the 15th century but in 1511, the Portuguese under the command of Alfonso d'Albuquerque, captured it. A fortress town was established in Malacca and the persecution of Muslims followed relentlessly while they propagated their Christian faith. However, Lisbon's feudal attitude towards her Asiatic possessions and her reluctance to reinvest part of the vast wealth she reaped from these territories, left her officials with inadequate salaries and inadequate protection (5). Soon the home government began to lose control over its Eastern territories which fell prey to the Dutch.

Like the Portuguese, the Dutch were also attracted to the spice trade in the East Indies and the tea, silk and fine porcelain ware that China had to offer. The strategic position of Malacca port, standing at the point where the converging shipping routes from East and West could most conveniently meet (5), was a prized port to capture and control. In 1641, the Dutch attacked Malacca, captured it and held it from 1641 to 1795. Unlike the Portuguese who were crusaders rather than traders, the Dutch concerned themselves solely with trade during the period of their rule

(6). The English who had captured Malacca in 1795, held on to it throughout the Napoleonic Wars from 1803 to 1815. However, it was restored to the Dutch Government in 1816 (7), but in 1825 (8), it again became an English possession.

2.3.2 The English East India Company and the foundation of modern Singapore

By the early 16th century, the Spaniards, the Portuguese and the Dutch had penetrated the unknown waters in the Eastern Hemisphere and each country in turn, had reaped a great fortune from the the spices and other Eastern goods that their ships had brought home. The English were anxious to follow their examples and have a share of that wealth. England wished to obtain oriental products as cheaply as possible, but she also hoped to expand her exports in her search for markets in Asia for her woollen cloth. But for some years, the English lacked the shipping and the commercial organisation to challenge the Portuguese and the Dutch in the East (5). However, a boost to English efforts came in 1580 when Francis Drake returned from his voyage round the world. Subsequent voyages to the East were made in 1586 by Thomas Cavendish who reached Moluccas and in 1591 by James Lancaster who called at West Sumatra and Penang (9).

The successes of these men prompted the London merchants to establish their East India Company which began as a joint stock company. Under its royal charter of 31 December 1600, the E.I.Co. was granted a monopoly of the

trade in the region between the Cape of Good Hope and the Magellan Straits for a period of fifteen years (9). In 1601, James Lancaster set sail with a fleet of 4 ships to Acheh and Bantam where the first commercial contacts were established with the spice merchants in these towns. By this time, the Dutch were becoming the predominant power in the East Indies. They had built up a system of local alliances, offering protection and the toleration of Islam in return for trading concessions (5). Unable to break into their monopoly and control of the trade in this region, the English E.I.Co. turned its attention to mainland India where it was able to establish several settlements both along the east and west coasts in places like Goa, Surat, Masulipatam, Madras and Calcutta.

The first important English possession in the Malay Archipelago was the island of Penang. In 1786, on behalf of the E.I.Co., Francis Light, a British citizen, managed to gain possession of Penang by offering military assistance and an annual salary to the Sultan of Kedah (10). Besides Penang, which Light quickly turned into a thriving base, he also obtained for the E.I.Co., a strip of land known as Province Wellesley, on the mainland of the Malay Peninsula.

The capture of Malacca and Java from the Dutch during the Napoleonic Wars would have strengthened the British commercial position in the East Indies, but the conclusion of the Wars saw the return of these territories

to the Dutch. The return of Malacca and Java to the Dutch necessitated the urgent quest for a base for trade. Penang lacked the potential for development into a great port and naval base being situated too far to the north of the Straits of Malacca. Both Stamford Raffles and the Marquis of Hastings, the Governor-General of India had Riau in mind as "a station beyond Malacca, such as may command the southern entrance to those Straits" (Hall (9), p.500), but the Dutch succeeded in forestalling Raffles in Riau in 1818. From Penang, Raffles sailed southwards in his mission to discover a new site, picking up Major William Farquhar from Malacca on his way. The latter who had just handed over the territory to the Dutch, was commissioned to join Raffles in his mission (11). "Either by accident or design" says Swettenham (Swettenham (12), p.66), they landed on the island of Singapore on 28 January 1819.

Upon setting eyes on the island, Raffles at once recognised its immense potentialities. When Raffles first landed near the mouth of the muddy Singapore River to a warm welcome by the Malay Temenggong Abdul Rahman, Chief of the island, a Prince of the House of Johore, he learnt that the island belonged to the Sultan of Johore and the consent of the latter had to be obtained if an English settlement was to be established on the island. The succession to the throne of Johore was unsettled then due to the fact that the eldest son of the former Sultan had been in Pahang for his wedding when his father died. His younger brother who had

been acting as Regent during his absence, refused to hand back control upon his return. This younger brother Abdurrahman had the support not only of Tunku Putri in Riau who held all the regalia but also the Dutch. Raffles decided to support the eldest son Tunku Long. He installed him as Sultan Hussein of Johore on 6 February 1819. At one o'clock that afternoon, a guard of honour mounted by Raffles' troops, welcomed the new ruler (13). This was followed by the signing of an agreement between Raffles and the new Sultan and Temenggong Abdul Rahman which allowed the E.I.Co. to set up a trading post on the island. In a letter to a friend, Raffles outlined his reasons for establishing Singapore. He wrote,

> One free port in these seas must eventually destroy the spell of Dutch monopoly. Our object is not territory, but trade, a great commercial emporium, and a fulcrum when we may extend our influence politically as circumstances may hereafter require.
>
> (Raffles (14), pp.255-59)

Immediately after acquiring Singapore port for the E.I.Co., Raffles left to take up his new appointment as Lt.-Governor of Bencoolen. During the years 1819 to 1823, Singapore became a dependency of Bencoolen. In October 1822, Raffles returned to Singapore and stayed on till June 1823. Before leaving in 1823, he managed to get the Sultan and the Temenggong to agree to place the island completely under English control. Thus the following year, the two Malay rulers ceded the island in perpetuity to the E.I.Co. and surrendered the monopolies and dues they had previously

imposed on trade (9). In return, the Sultan received a lump sum of 33,200 Spanish dollars and a pension of 1,300 dollars a month for life while the Temenggong received a lump sum of 26,800 dollars and 700 dollars a month for life. They further promised not to enter into any alliance with any foreign power without the consent of the Company and to admit English commerce freely to all the ports of Johore on most favoured nation terms (9).

In the 17th century, in order to monopolise and restrict the production of cloves, the Dutch had found it necessary to destroy clove plantations wherever they were found in unauthorised areas outside Amboyna. In order that the whole Moluccas area should be a closed reserve for Dutch exploitation, the locals were prohibited from trade or diplomatic relations with other parts of Asia (5). The British, however, operated differently from the Dutch as regards Singapore. Private and local merchants were allowed to trade freely side by side with the E.I.Co. Although taxes were imposed on trade and land holdings, Company and later Government administrators did not interfere with crop production.

Under Major Farquhar, its first Resident (15), revenue was also raised from gambling and even cock-fighting. The Company gave its top officials permission to hold land and Raffles took advantage of this privilege. Winstedt (16) tells us that Raffles instructed Farquhar to reserve half the lots on the seafront of the island for

himself, his relatives and friends.

Since the island was barely inhabited prior to to British occupation, the question of Malay hereditary rights to land did not occur. The problem of land holding centred on the terms on which land could be acquired. In 1840, agricultural lands were leased for a period of twenty years but later, under local pressure, the Bengal Government which controlled Singapore from 1831-1851, allowed Crown land for agricultural purposes to be bought by the farmers. This encouraged the cultivation of pepper and gambier, a product used in the tanning and dyeing processes, with much success by the Chinese. The Europeans before them had planted cloves, nutmegs and sugar. In 1886, Malay land holdings under ten years continuous occupation, were confirmed as permanent, heritable and transferable (17). Holdings were now to be determined as Tate (17) points out, by demarcation carried out by the penghulu (18) and registered in a mukim register.

2.3.3 Demographic and political developments of Singapore after 1819

In 1819, the population of Singapore numbered one hundred and fifty of whom the majority were Orang Laut and Malay followers of the Temenggong including about thirty Chinese farmers (3). Besides the natural advantages of Singapore as a port serving the whole of the Archipelago and Raffles' policy of free trade for the island, another vital factor which contributed to the phenomenal development of

the new town was Raffles' encouragement of settlers (6). In his letter to the Duchess of Somerset on 11 June 1819, Raffles wrote,

> My new colony thrives most rapidly. We have not been established four months, and it has received an accession of population exceeding 5,000 - principally Chinese, and their number is daily increasing.
>
> (Raffles (19), p.25)

By 1824, the number had risen to over 10,000 and by 1830, to 16,000. Raffles had forseen that the industrious Chinese would eventually form the bulk of the population and he was right for by 1860, out of over 80,000 people on the island, more than half were Chinese. South Chinese from the Guandong province, Fukien labourers, Swatow merchants, Foochow craftsmen and Hainanese cooks made their way here. Besides these respectable, hardworking and thrifty early immigrants genuinely dedicated to seeking an honest livelihood here, there were also a number of criminals, gangsters, actors, (in Chinese culture traditionally viewed as undesirable), and adventurers.

As early as the 10th and 11th centuries, Chinese merchants and adventurers had arrived on the shores of the Gulf of Siam and beyond. Internal developments within China in the early part of the 19th century were instrumental in forcing many Chinese to leave their homes to seek their fortunes abroad. The steady growth in the population under two hundred years of firm Manchu rule had culminated in food shortage. This was accompanied by natural disaster and

political unrest while the intrusion of the West, symbolised by the opium trade and the First Anglo-Chinese Wars, further aggravated the situation (17). The great Taiping Rebellion which saw the loss of 20 million lives, ravaged the country and lasted half a generation, that is, from 1848-1865, was another salient factor which induced many to migrate (17). The cheap and quick passage by steamship accorded many the opportunity to travel abroad.

Arab merchants who had found their way to Singapore as early as the 13th century, increased in number as the entrepôt trade offered them unlimited opportunities to make great profits. Muslim missionaries from India and the Middle East, Sumatra and Java also came to propagate their religion. Malay labourers too from Peninsula Malaya flocked here to work in the plantations and European business houses. In the early decades of the 19th century, there existed a Javanese community, a professional group of people known as 'sheikhs' (20). These sheikhs specialised in supplying cheap Javanese labour to cultivate the lands of the Malay landowners. They had their own team of agents who recruited labourers from Java, brought them over to Singapore, housed and fed them before passing them over to the landowners. Tunku Shamsul Bahrin (20) further tells us that besides being fed and housed by the landowner, it was common practice for the labourer to be given as his own property, half of the land he had cleared and cultivated.

Six years after the foundation of Singapore,

convicts from India were sent to the colony to clear the land, build roads and put up buildings. After 1880, indentured labourers in large numbers were shipped here to work in British plantations. The majority were Tamils from Madras. Unlike his Chinese counterpart, many of whom came to Singapore at the behest of his fellow-countrymen, the average Indian labourer came as a recruit to work on the estate of an European owner because his "docility and amenability to discipline" (Tate (17), p.23) were qualities favoured by their European masters. They were, however, unable to establish a strong foothold here due to the fact that their contracts were on a short-term basis. They were also prevented from social mobility by what Tate (17) claims to be the restrictive mould of his own society, for strict discipline and regimentation were the main features of an Indian immigrant's life.

But a group of Indians featured prominently in the community. Besides the small merchant class, there came from Madras and the Tamil belt of Jaffna, a number of English-educated Tamils who took up posts as clerks, hospital dispensers, court-pleaders and teachers thus forming a small professional middle class (17). By the 1930s, except for a minor group of business and professional men, the majority of the Indians (Klings as they were known in the early days) in Peninsula Malaya and Singapore were the descendants of indentured labourers (those who stayed on after their contract had expired), who as Tate (17)

points out, were still occupying the same strata of society as rubber tappers, road and railway workers and municipal or port labourers.

At the very beginning, the various races of immigrants settled where they liked but soon Raffles allotted different sites to the Chinese, Klings, Malays, Bugis (Indonesians), Europeans etc. (21). Since the Chinese formed the bulk of the population, Raffles found it feasible to place them under the immediate control of their own chiefs. It was as Purcell (21) points out, not until 1821, that a rudimentary police force was set up to establish law and order in the colony. This small force of eighteen, however, was quite ineffective in stamping out the activities of the Chinese secret societies. A state of lawlessness prevailed for years. Several murders were reported in a week and no proper means were available to track down the culprits or to protect life and property in the outlying areas (21). Riots which first broke out in 1824 then successively in 1831, 1851 and 1854 lasted for days and resulted in the deaths of hundreds of innocent Chinese.

Purcell (21) further tells us that Raffles, who was particularly concerned with social distinctions in the communities under his control, placed those Chinese involved in mercantile speculation in the first class, those gaining their livelihood by handicrafts and personal labour were ranked second while the farmers were classified as belonging

to the third class. His classification of the early Chinese immigrants into the above classes, however, contradicted the basic Confucian ethics which regard the scholar as the one to be placed first, the farmer second, the artisan third and the merchant fourth. Raffles' choice of the merchants as 'the higher and more respectable class' (Purcell (21), p.250), was probably due to two factors: their signal contribution to the importance of Singapore as a trading settlement and secondly, the absence of Chinese scholars in the early days of her foundation.

Singapore's entrepôt port status naturally attracted in the early years a large number of British merchant houses which set up their businesses here. With them came firstly their officers and later their families. The English administrators, soldiers, seamen, entrepreneurs all contributed to the increase in the population throughout the 19th century and well into the first half of the 20th century.

In the first census taken in January 1824, C.B. Buckley reports that the population stood at 10,683 of which 4,580 were Malays, 3,317 were Chinese, 756 were Indians, 74 were Europeans, 1,925 were Bugis with 16 Armenians and 15 Arabs (22). Of the Malays, for reasons which cannot be determined, the ratio of women to men was 2:1 while that of the Chinese was 1:8. For decades in the early 19th century, the population remained predominantly male, made up of transient immigrants whose main interest in coming to

Singapore was to hope to reap a fortune and return to their native homeland after a number of years of hard work. The men did not bring their wives and children but left them behind in their native lands because most of them could not afford to take their families overseas and in the case of the Chinese, because the authorities in China though lax in allowing the emigration of males, took great precautions to prevent females from leaving the country (21). However, the prohibition was gradually relaxed and on the Singapore side, in 1933, the Singapore Aliens Ordinance imposed quotas on the entry of males thus discouraging the tendency of both Chinese and Indian males from returning to their homelands and at the same time, enabled the quotas to be filled by an increasing number of young Chinese women who settled in the colony and married. This helped to balance the uneven distribution of sexes. During those years when Singapore suffered an acute shortage of women, the traffic in women and girls and prostitution was rife. Inter-marriages, too, were common. It was not unusual for the rich Chinese merchants to have two wives, one in China and one in Singapore or Malaya depending on where they worked and set up their businesses.

When the Straits Settlements were under the political management of India from 1831 onwards, first under the direct control of the Government of Bengal, and twenty years later under the personal supervision of the Governor-General in India, many Singaporeans, particularly the British and Chinese merchants, were unhappy with this

arrangement. Not only did they suspect that the Indian authorities wanted to interfere with the island's free trade status by imposing port levies and other taxes but they believed that the island was being used as a convenient dumping ground for convicts and as a military base (3). With the passing of the Indian Currency Act in 1855 which threatened to replace the existing silver dollar currency of the Straits with the Indian rupee which would adversely affect its trade, the people of Singapore began to agitate for the transfer of the control of the Settlements from the India Office to the direct control of the Colonial Office in London (3). In 1867, London acceded to their request and this system of administration continued well into the 20th century.

Except in a few instances, for example, in South Africa, in the Opium Wars in China, in Burma and parts of India where the English had to apply force to bring about submission of its people and territory, military conquest had played a small part in the founding of the British Empire. Most of it had been acquired by means of settlement, purchase or voluntary cession (23). For years, the British Government did not interfere with the internal affairs of the Malay states in the Malay Peninsula but in 1895, the four Malay states of Negri Sembilan, Pahang, Perak and Selangor were brought under British protection with a British Resident-General and a centralised system of government and they became known as the Federated Malay

States. As Newton (23) points out, a deciding factor which compelled British intervention in these states was the growing force of piracy which threatened the smooth traffic of trade through the Straits of Malacca. Piracy, on the whole, was carried on with the sanction of, and often for the profit of, the Sultans. Johore had accepted a treaty of protection in 1885 (24). The threat of Siam in the northern part of the Malay Peninsula was removed when in 1909, by the Treaty of Bangkok, Siam transferred all rights of suzerainty of Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis and Trengganu to Britain (25).

The acquisition of these states and the expansion of British power in the Malay Peninsula coincided with Britain's era of imperialism (1886-1901). Britain's rapid industrial growth in the preceding century had changed her from a basically agricultural to a predominantly urban nation, supported by a large foreign trade (25). Pelling (25) further stresses that she was dependent, as never before, upon imports of raw materials and food in exchange for her manufactured goods and other services. Besides, her agriculture was also affected by the system of free trade which exposed the home farmers to strong competition from abroad. Other countries were eager to buy British industrial exports but they often paid for them by means of agricultural produce. In order to compete effectively and successfully, Britain had to pioneer the application of new inventions or the development of new industries which she failed to carry out. Instead, the United States and Germany began to lead the field with new inventions and machinery.

The Malayan states of Johore, Kedah, Negri Sembilan, Pahang and Selangor particularly were rich in either tin or rubber. These two commodities were most useful in the manufacture of modern vehicles, machinery and utilities for a world market that would enrich the coffers of the British treasury. Realising the potential of these Malayan states, Britain began to acquire them.

A great influx of Chinese labourers found their way to Singapore en route to the Malayan plantations and tin mines. Many managed to make their living in these states but some failed to make good there and instead found their niche in Singapore. These late batches of immigrants further swelled the population in the latter half of the 19th century.

Before the overthrow of the Manchu regime in China in 1911, thousands who feared retribution for their own or members of their families' participations in anti-Manchu uprisings, fled the country. These sought refuge in Singapore, Malaya and other parts of South-East Asia. The 1930s, 1940s and 1950s saw another great flow of Chinese immigrants to this region especially following two traumatic events that took place in China: firstly, the Sino-Japanese War of 1937 and secondly, the overthrow of the Nationalist Government by the Communists in 1949. In 1931, the population was 570,000 but by 1950 it had swollen to 1,022,000, an increase of 79.3%.

Up to the end of the Second World War, immigrants

constituted the bulk of the population. As Ong (26) points out, when business conditions were good, immigrants from the neighbouring lands, for example, Malaya, China, Indonesia, India, Ceylon and other parts of the world came but when business was bad, many returned to their farms, villages and hometowns. However, after the War, a new trend set in. With the withdrawal of the colonial powers in East and South Asia, countries which received their independence began to impose controls on emigration of their nationals. Meanwhile, many who were first generation immigrants to Singapore began to set up permanent homes here. The birth rate began to rise steadily so that by 1960, the population stood at 1,646,000; in 1970, it was 2,074,507 and at 30 June 1983, it was 2,502,000 comprising 1,917,100 Chinese, 368,500 Malays, 160,600 Indians (including Pakistanis, Bangladashis and Sri Lankans) and 55,800 persons of other ethnic groups (27). The Chinese constitute the largest group, that is 76.6% of the population, the Malays 14.7%, the Indians 6.4% while the remaining ethnic groups, a mere 2.3% (27).

Table 2.A below reveals the gradual but steady increase in the population after the Second World War:

TABLE 2.A

POPULATION AND VITAL STATISTICS (1947-1960)

Year	Population	Natural Increase	Live Births	Total Deaths
1947	938,144	30,534	43,045	12,511
1948	960,800	32,517	44,450	11,933
1949	978,700	34,548	46,169	11,621
1950	1,022,100	34,059	46,371	12,312
1955	1,305,500	47,239	57,812	10,573
1960	1,646,400	51,565	61,775	10,027

(Source: Statistics Department, Singapore, 1960)

The relatively smooth progress in Singapore's economic and political development since its foundation right up to the first half of the 20th century, was shattered by the outbreak of the Pacific War. On 16 February 1942, Japanese troops invaded the island. For three-and-a-half years up to 5 September 1945, the island was under Japanese occupation. Not only did it suffer economic deprivation but practically all forms of educational, social and political activities came to a standstill for the first few months. About 50,000 lives were lost through hunger, shellings and mass executions mainly of Chinese males while the populace struggled through a period of 'hell on earth'. From September 1945 to March 1946, the island came under British Military Administration but on 1 April 1946, Singapore was made a Crown Colony to which the dependencies of Christmas Island and Cocos Islands were attached (27).

As early as 1924, Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the great

Chinese nationalist leader pointed out the absence of nationalism among the people of China. To quote him,

> ..our people have shown loyalty to the family and clan but not to the nation - there has been no nationalism. The family and the clan have been powerful unifying forces; again and again (the people) have sacrificed themselves, their families, their lives in defence of their clan .. But for the nation there has never been an instance of the supreme spirit of sacrifice.
> (Warshaw (10), Op.Cit. p.67)

Before Westerners made their impact on South-East Asia, Warshaw (10) notes that the people there thought of themselves as members of religious, ethnic and cultural groups rather than as nations. Large populations were unified by monarchies which were in turn identified with single ethnic groups. The people did not consider themselves as citizens of a nation but as part of local communities.

The turn of the 20th century then saw three Asian countries projecting a new concept of society, a society in which the people were to be free from domination by Western powers. The first of these countries was Japan which succeeded in maintaining her political status quo and in 1905 even defeated Russia, a Western power. The Chinese under Dr. Sun Yat-sen not only succeeded in driving out the Manchus from China but strove to avoid Western economic domination (10). The third country was India. Its great leader M.K. Gandhi, campaigned vigorously against British rule through his non-violence movement and finally

the country gained complete independence in 1947. These were classic examples to emulate. Thus the seeds of nationalism had been planted in Malaya and Singapore long before the Japanese invaded the two territories and were nurtured through the period of Japanese occupation. Further stimulus to Asian nationalism was the slogan 'Asia for the Asiatics' by Japan as well as her impressive military success against Western colonial powers at the start of the Pacific War (5).

Thus after the liberation, Singapore's nationalists began to question the authority and legitimacy of British rule (28). The 1946 Singapore Order-in-Council gave Singapore its own constitution with a governor, a nominated executive council and a legislative council but, as Chan (28) points out, there was little change in the exercise of power for the Governor retained his veto and reserved powers over legislation. In 1948, although 9 elected members out of a total of 25 were included in the legislature for the first time, local people were still not given effective roles to play in public affairs.

In the early days of the 1950s, anti-colonial campaigns were mounted against British administration. They took the forms of demonstrations, strikes and riots which had the support of communists, workers, students and genuine nationalists. As Dr. Goh Keng Swee, the Finance Minister wrote in an article in 1976:

> The anti-imperialist united front campaign of the 1950s represented not only a demand for independence: it was also a protest against those social and economic conditions which people regard as intolerable. Living conditions in the city's overcrowded slums were appalling. There was widespread unemployment, particularly acute among those with secondary education and especially among those from the Chinese language schools.
> (Goh (29), p.77)

The Rendel Constitution paved the way for self-government for as a result of its recommendations, in 1955, a 32 member Legislative Assembly was set up of whom 25 were to be elected from one member constituencies. General elections to the first fully-elected Legislative Assembly were held on 30 May 1959 and four days later, on 3 June 1959, Singapore Order-in-Council came into operation as Singapore achieved internal self-government.

Malaysia, the brain-child of Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Prime Minister of Malaya then, which was to be a conglomeration of the Federation of Malaya, Brunei, North Borneo (Sabah), Sarawak and Singapore, was born on 31 August 1963. All the 11 states of Malaya, Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore except for Brunei which backed out at the last moment, were incorporated into the merger. However, differences between the Malaysian and Singapore Governments on how to build up a 'Malaysian Malaysia' led to Singapore's withdrawal from the merger on 9 August 1965. On that date, Singapore officially became a fully independent and sovereign nation, responsible for its own destiny.

Singapore today is a socialist state. Socialism

in Singapore is interpreted in a meritocratic and paternalistic sense. It has a democratic system of government. Parliamentary elections are held every five years. Parliament is unicameral and consists of 79 members elected by secret ballot in single-member constituencies. Every Singapore citizen twenty-one years of age or over, regardless of race, sex or creed, is eligible to vote and voting is compulsory. Any citizen over the age of twenty-one, subject to certain qualifications, can stand for election to parliament either as a member of the dozen or so registered political parties or as an independent.

2.4 Economic growth and development of Singapore from 1819 to the present day

2.4.1 An overview of the economic situation in the 19th and 20th centuries

On 6 February 1819 after the signing of the treaty with the Sultan Hussein which gave the E.I Co. a small area of land and control of the port of Singapore, Raffles left the island to assume control in Bencoolen. Meanwhile Major William Farquhar took over command of Singapore as Resident and Commandant. He saw to the clearing of the land and the building of official residences for himself and his subordinates. The strategic position of its excellent port with its natural harbour which commands the southern entrance to the Straits of Malacca, attracted the shipping of the region. Not only were Asian vessels of every class

and description from its neighbours, for example, China, India, Indonesia, Vietnam and Cambodia to be found in its port, but European vessels of every nationality (3). In fact, during the first 20 months of its modern foundation, some 3,000 ships had called there with cargoes worth more than 2 million sterling. The annual value of the island's trade was 4 million sterling by 1830 and a decade later, it had reached 6 million (3).

Although pepper and gambier were successfully cultivated for a couple of decades, the island on the whole produced nothing. Singapore had no mineral wealth either. She rose as an entrepôt port handling bulk goods in transit, serving as a centre for distributing goods from the international traffic throughout the area, and acting as a collecting centre for regional products, which were then processed for export (17). From her neighbours, namely Malaya and Indonesia, agricultural and mineral produce (which came to be known as Straits produce) and from China tea and silks, were collected in her port and between half and two-thirds of these products were shipped to India, Great Britain, Europe and the United States. From the West came Indian cottons and opium, steel, iron, glass-ware and wines from Europe which were later sold to countries in the East.

For the first few decades, Singapore's free trade system benefitted mainly the Europeans and the Chinese. However, later in the century, Indian merchants also

acquired some share of the trade but after 1900, large business houses from America and Japan began to make their impact on the colony's business activities. Up to the outbreak of the Pacific War, European enterprise which monopolised the entrepôt trade with Europe, America and India also had sole control over the importation of overseas manufactures serving as managing agencies for Western manufacturers handling their goods on a commission basis on the market (17). The merchant houses were predominantly British up to the 1860s but after that, the Germans and Japanese took the lead. After 1900, Asians, for example, Straits Chinese, Indians and Ceylonese too began to play prominent roles establishing direct contact with the manufacturers of Europe, America and the Far East.

During a greater part of the early 19th century, Singapore's trade with China came a good second in importance to that with the West. Singapore was then the main headquarters and transhipment centre for all British trade with Canton. Soon it became the main distribution centre for opium in the Archipelago but its value declined with the appearance of the new opium clippers in the 1830s which sailed direct between Bengal and China (17). Besides, its position as a transhipment centre was overshadowed by Hong Kong which the British acquired in 1842, under the Treaty of Nanking.

The 1860s saw the island's trade in the doldrums. Towards the end of the decade, however, a dramatic economic

turn-around occurred. Imports which had increased by only Straits $5.5 million over the whole of the decade, rose by Straits $7 million in 1870 alone (3). This was attributed to the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the extension of the European telegraph to Singapore by way of India in 1870. More ships called at its port leading to greater flow and volume of trade between East and West as the Suez Canal enabled steamships to sail from Europe to Singapore with considerable savings in time. The increase in the number of steamships meant more bunkering space in the port; thus a rapid expansion in the building of wharves and docks took place.

In the 1870s and 1880s, after the British Government's intervention in the affairs of the Western Malay states, Singapore merchants began to invest in tin mining and infant rubber industries in these states. Prior to the 20th century then, Singapore operated as the financial and commercial centre for the economic development of Malaya (3). Throughout the First World War, regional trade remained buoyant. Much hardship was experienced in the 1920s and early 1930s due to the great depression world-wide, but prosperity gradually returned when economic stability picked up momentum after 1933.

As mentioned earlier, the three-and-a-half years of Japanese occupation of Singapore from February 1942 to September 1945 had affected its economy, upset its stability and was accompanied by the wilful destruction of lives,

property and merchandise. Millions of dollars worth of Straits produce and other commodities such as petrol went up in smoke. It took months after the liberation for life to return to normal. The rubber boom of the early 1950s helped to boost its economy. Its strategic locality and its entrepôt status continued to attract shipping and commerce throughout the world thus today, Singapore is the second busiest port in the world after Rotterdam.

In 1959, when internal self-government was granted to the colony, Singapore's Gross National Product (GNP) stood at US$643 million. The bulk of its prosperity came from its entrepôt trade, the life blood of Singapore (26). But the locally-elected PAP Government realised that the island's economy could not be sustained on this trade alone which could not provide the additional jobs needed because it could not grow fast enough. A United Nations Industrial Survey Mission invited to Singapore in 1960 and 1961 by the PAP Government to study the problems confronting the new nation, estimated that at least 214,000 new jobs had to be created for its growing population by 1970 (26). Three areas were identified as having the potential for growth: namely, manufacturing industry, tourism and the banking, insurance and finance sector. Of these three sectors, industrial development was found to be the most feasible as it was expected to create at least 98,000 jobs before 1970.

With determination, a great sense of dedication and with the risk of plunging the country into bankruptcy

should the venture fail, the PAP Government went into the task of industrialisation in full swing. Marshy lands were cleared and industrial estates soon sprang up with ready-built factory buildings and fully serviced by roads and all necessary utilities. These estates were located near housing estates to facilitate travelling and cut down time in travelling and transport costs of workers (26). Singapore also expanded its postal services, telecommunication links, sea ports, airports and roads to facilitate movement and communication world-wide. From 1968, with the incorporation of the Jurong Town Corporation (JTC), work on the project began in earnest.

Lack of sufficient capital did not deter the government from venturing into this ambitious plan to industrialise. Internally, several measures were swiftly taken to conserve money and these included a period of belt-tightening in expenditure by all ministries and statutory boards. Loans to lower grades of civil servants to purchase cars, for example, were frozen. Money was also raised from customs duties, income and company taxes, licence fees and services provided by the government, for example, postal services, and from profits from government-owned enterprises like the Singapore International Airlines (26). A large source of money that the govenment was able to lay its hands on was the contributions made monthly by all workers and employers in Singapore. Every employee and employer from the private or public sector has to contribute to the Central Provident Fund (CPF) which was established in

1955 as a compulsory savings scheme to ensure that employees are adequately provided for in their old age (27). Yearly, over a thousand million dollars were saved and the CPF invests funds in government loans yielding an interest of 6.25%. A joint government-private venture, namely the Development Bank of Singapore (DBS), was started in 1968 to provide services in wholesale banking, including development financing, consumer banking, investment banking, international banking, treasury operations and real estate development. The government also had to rely on assistance from external sources like the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank for loans.

Unlike other socialist states which shun capitalism, the Singapore PAP Government, which has been in power for the last quarter century, has encouraged multinationals and private enterprise in all forms. Singapore's socialism if that is what we can call it, must seem to the Western eye a contradiction in terms. It is based on meritocracy and paternalism. Equality of opportunity is the keystone and indeed most of the men who run the administration and plan the country's future, come from poor and middle class homes and from different language schools. They have risen to the top by their own merit, hard work and high performance as the Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew pointed out in his speech on 28 April 1971 (30).

When the government launched its most daring

project, that is, industrialisation, in order to establish a viable economy that would provide employment for everyone, as well as give its workers rising incomes and improved standards of living, it had to depend on foreign multinationals. These organisations could provide the resources which Singapore required in order to succeed as an industrialised nation: namely, capital, markets and technological expertise (26).

To attract multinational corporations, tax incentives in the form of pioneer status were granted to companies wishing to set up new industries. Such companies were exempted from paying the standard 40% tax on company profits for a period of five years or more depending on the size and type of investments (26). Ong (26) further tells us that to encourage these companies to export, manufacturing companies can qualify for three extra years during which they are taxed at 4% instead of 40%. A further incentive to create an atmosphere conducive to smooth and peaceful economic progress and development was the passing of two important acts in August 1968 namely: the Employment Act and the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act. The Employment Act protected young industries from the need to grant excessive retrenchment benefits and rationalised pay structure by removing certain abuses related to overtime work, while the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act defined the rights of unions and management in such matters as recruitment, promotion of employees and retrenchment. These

subjects were considered to be outside the range of labour-management negotiations so as to discourage and minimize labour disputes (26). To ensure stability and better productivity, the Act also encouraged collective agreements of longer duration preferably three to five years.

To woo foreign investors to invest in Singapore, the Economic Development Board (EDB) was set up in 1961. It set up offices in London, Frankfurt, Stockholm, Geneva, Tokyo, Paris, New York, Melbourne and other cities throughout the world. EDB representatives visited multinationals in their head offices to 'sell' Singapore in its promotion campaign. Singapore was not the only country among the developing countries in Asia, Africa and South America which was out to attract multinationals to set up their businesses in their countries but the dynamic force of her team of international salesmen who strove relentlessly in their efforts, produced remarkable results. Today, multinational companies from Britain, the United States, Japan, Germany and other developed countries of the world have branches in the republic.

The government's economic policy also involved its direct participation in industry. By the end of 1968, the JTC, a statutory board, owned 293 factory buildings and thousands of flats and shop-houses involving a capital investment of S$588 million. The DBS, a joint venture between the government and local investors, had a paid up

capital of S$100 million of which S$49 million was invested by the government. By 1971, the DBS had loaned S$219.7 million to sixty-three firms and seventeen of them were wholly government-owned (13). Another government-private venture is the International Trading Company with an authorised capital of S$50 million of which the government's stake is 6 million shares, the private sector is 10.2 million shares and the DBS 3.8 million shares. At present, the government has equity holdings in thirty joint ventures with industrial, banking, shipping and transport companies, for example, Keppel and Sembawang Shipyards and the Singapore Bus Company. In sum, it has direct or indirect participation in about 100 firms as Josey (13) points out.

Thus by 1970, the workforce stood at 651,000 while in the early 1960s, it was 433,000. The anticipated increase as projected by the United Nations Industrial Survey Mission was achieved. The GNP by 1975 had grown to US$5,773 million. As for the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which was S$1,985.3 million in 1960, it jumped to S$5,319.9 million in 1970 and six years later, in 1976, was up another two-and-a-half times more at S$13,814.2 million.

The political stability, the dedication of her workforce, the relative calm in the domestic economic sphere especially with the gradual decline in industrial action, for example, in 1981 only 147 trade disputes were registered with the Industrial Arbitration Court (2), and the absence of strikes in the last decade, as well as the availability

of cheap labour together generated foreign confidence in local investments. Singapore's economy thus continued to grow and expand as its performance during the period 1978 to 1983 in Table 2.B reveals.

2.4.2 The role of trade unions in Singapore's economic development

In the early 1950s when the anti-colonial movement began to make its impact felt in Singapore, the colony was often the scene of riots spearheaded by workers and Chinese students. These communist-inspired activities reflected the squalor, mass unemployment and colonial educational system that prevailed under British administration. Strikes were a common feature in that decade and well into the 1960s while the PAP Government struggled through its industrialisation programme. Numerous trade unions were infiltrated by men and women sympathetic to the Communist movement. A number of hard-core Communist cadres managed to gain control of the unions and were responsible for inciting their fellow workers to create industrial unrest throughout the island. In 1961 alone, there were 116 strikes and 410,889 working hours were lost (26). All these actions were aimed at a Communist take-over of the government. Subversion was fiercely resisted by the PAP Government on the grounds of its danger to the political stability and economic viability of Singapore. Known Communists and their sympathisers were swiftly arrested and detained without trial under the Internal Security Act. Within the PAP organisation itself,

TABLE 2.B

ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE, 1978-1983

	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
GNP at current market prices ($M)	17,707.6	20,373.4	23,312.9	27,699.1	31,046.5	34,485.9*
GDP at 1968 factor cost ($M)	10,088.6	11,030.9	12,160.5	13,369.3	14,217.9	15,339.7*
Per capita indigenous GNP at current market prices ($M)	5,968.0	6,511.0	7,424.0	9,049.0	10,103.0	11,031.0*
Total external trade ($M)	52,586.8	69,274.5	92,797.1	102,538.8	104,717.4	105,659.1
Imports ($M)	29,601.3	38,334.4	51,344.8	58,248.0	60,244.6	59,504.2
Exports ($M)	22,985.5	30,940.1	41,452.3	44,290.8	44,472.8	46,154.9
Manufacturing output+ ($M)	20,468.0	26,303.9	32,710.4	37,559.7	36,961.6	35,183.4*
Value added in manufacturing ($M)	5,199.6	6,500.6	8,573.4	9,757.5	9,383.4	9,076.1*
Foreign investment in manufacturing sector ($M)	5,242.0	5,698.0	7,145.0	7,930.0¦		
Banks	81.0	89.0	97.0	108.0	118.0	122.0
Assets/libilities ($B)	21.2	26.7	33.3	44.6	48.5	56.5
POSB deposits ($M)	2,053.2	2,554.8	2,783.0	3,042.0		
Official foreign reserves at end period ($B)	11.5	12.6	13.8	15.5	17.9	19.8*
Balance of payments (overall balance) ($M)	1,511.5	1,137.3	1,433.8	1,938.4	2,517.5	2,237.7*
Currency in gross circulation ($M)	2,822.0	3,181.0	3,499.0	3,690.0	4,339.0	4,740.0
Tourist arrivals [@] (persons)	2,047,224.0	2,247,091.0	2,562,085.0	2,828,899.0	2,956,690.0	2,853,577.0
Tourist earnings ($M)	1,843.6	2,439.0	3,068.4	3,786.4	4,034.2	4,182.9*
Hotel rooms	11,505.0	12,159.0	12,756.0	13,924.0	14,097.0	14,468.0

KEY
* = Preliminary
\+ = Including rubber processing
[@] = By air, sea and land
¦ = June 1981

(Source: Ministry of Culture, Singapore. 1984)

anti-national members were flushed out. The relentless effort of the government succeeded as workers began to freely elect a new breed of leaders who were anti-Communist and, instead, believed in the creation of a prosperous Singapore in which they would promote the welfare of their supporters and in which everyone would be entitled to a piece of the rich cake that they had helped to bake.

Writing in his capacity as Minister for Finance, Dr. Goh Keng Swee in 1976 states:

> ..the labour movement took an enlightened long-term view of their group interests. They were willing to give the growth policy a chance to succeed. They reined in the labour militants who, either from past experience or individual disposition, believed that the right thing for trade unions to do was to get at the employers' throats. Had such a policy been adopted by the National Trades Union Congress unions, our attempts at industrial growth would have been abortive.
>
> (Goh (29), p.83)

The institutional independence of the trade union movement from both party and government in Singapore had been scrupulously maintained since the attainment of self-government in 1959. Even in key statutory boards like the Public Utilities Board, the Adult Education Board, the Port of Singapore Authority, trade union representation is present. The National Wages Council which was set up in 1972 to determine wage increases for the year for all workers in the public and private sectors depending on the republic's economic performance, has an equal representation of trade unions, employers and the government.

Today, as the former Secretary-General of the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) Devan Nair (31) claims, Singapore's trade unions are no longer the vehicles of pro-Communist agents furthering the aim of the Communist Party of Malaya. Instead they have co-operated with the government to establish a dynamic, caring institution which strives for the welfare of its members. The NTUC was responsible for setting up a chain of co-operative supermarkets known as WELCOME to combat rising food prices when world-wide inflation hit Singapore. The NTUC also started the trade union transport co-operative known as COMFORT which has a fleet of over 2,000 owner-driven taxis, 350 owner-driven minibuses and 28 shuttle buses. Another co-operative which retails low-cost textbooks to school children is entitled FAIRDEAL while DENTICARE provides low-cost dental treatment for workers and their families. One of its best known co-operatives is INCOME which sells insurance policies to both workers and members of the public generally.

The new and successful role of the trade union movement in Singapore today, is a far cry from what it was thirty years ago. Trade unions today have lived up to the expectations that the Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew had entreated of them. To quote the Prime Minister:

> In multi-racial countries like ours, trade unions have a special role in building up this spirit of camaraderie amongst the workers. Developing the economy, increasing productivity, increasing returns, these make sense only when fair play and fair shares make it worth everyone's while to put

> in his share of group survival and group prosperity.
>
> (Devan Nair (31), Op.Cit. p.97)

2.4.3 Singapore's economic position at present

In 1981, in Jurong, one of the several industrial centres dotted all over the island, there are 1,337 factories employing 112,000 workers. The gross fixed assets of all the industrial establishments in the 19 industrial estates which come under the purview of the JTC, totalled almost S$6 billion (2). Table 2.C gives an account of the location of the various industrial estates that are managed by the JTC, the type of industries principally carried out in each estate, the number of companies operating there and the labour force utilised.

In 1983, despite the world recession, the economy grew in real terms, at a rate of 7.9% whereas average growth rate for the greater part of the 1970s was 9.4%. The financial and business services sector remained the leading growth sector, expanding at a faster rate of 16% in 1983 and contributing 34.0% to the overall economic expansion. The main thrust of this sector's growth came from the increase in loans and advances extended by banks and finance companies as well as the buoyancy of the local market (27). The second contributor to the republic's economic growth in 1983 was the construction sector, expanding by 29.0% (27). The main impetus to the sector's growth was the accelerated public housing programme, hotel and office-cum-shopping complexes. The transport and communications sector was the

TABLE 2.C

JTC INDUSTRIAL ESTATES (1981)

Estate	Total area (Ha)	Area developed (Ha)	Type of Industry	No. of Companies	Labour force (estimated)
Ang Mo Kio	12.6	1.3	Light	12	1,440
Ayer Rajah	24.9	14.6	Light, Mixed	100	7,780
Jurong & Southern Is.	6,321.9	4,687.4	Comprehensive	1,337	112,000
Kallang Basin	102.9	70.5	Light, Mixed	520	37,100
Kallang Park	8.0	8.0	Shipping and Ship repairing; Mixed	39	1,363
Kampong Ampat	2.0	0.3	Light	3	290
Kranji	119.7	104.7	Woodbased	32	6,030
Loyang	187.4	87.5	Aviation	6	350
Redhill	4.3	4.3	Light	46	2,470
Sims Avenue	0.7	0.7	Light	25	1,010
St. Michael's	0.8	0.8	Light	18	2,360
Sungei Kadut	376.9	249.8	Woodbased	108	5,100
Tanjong Rhu	1.5	1.5	Electrical equipment	1	380
Tanglin Halt	16.8	16.8	Light	50	5,490
Telok Blangah	6.0	4.4	Light	41	4,170
Tiong Bahru	4.9	4.9	Light	73	8,490
Toa Payoh	6.3	0.3	Light	102	9,500
Woodlands East	170.2	88.9	Comprehensive	18	1,660
Yew Tee	25.5	24.3	Light	69	2,400
TOTAL	7,393.3	5,371.0		2,.600	209,383

(Source: Ministry of Culture, Singapore. 1982)

third leading growth sector in 1983, contributing 17.0% to the republic's overall growth (27).

As shown on Table 2.B, the balance of payments enjoyed a net surplus of S$2.2 billion. The republic's official foreign reserves stood at S$19.8 billion at the end of 1983. The higher level of foreign reserves was reflected in the strength of the Singapore dollar which remained firm on average against most currencies.

2.5 Conclusion

While the growth of Singapore as an entrepôt port in the first three decades after its foundation by Sir Stamford Raffles was meteoric, the next decade saw its economy going through a sluggish period. However, the opening of the Suez Canal at the end of the 1860s, helped to boost its trade and economy. The revived, improved economic position was sustained right through to the 20th century. Meanwhile, throughout the 19th century, the influx of immigrants, predominantly Chinese, continued relentlessly, spurred on by internal political and economic instability in China.

In the 20th century, except for intermittent periods, for example, during the Great Depression of the early 1930s and the Japanese occupation of the early 1940s, which upset its economic growth and development and brought hardship to many, Singapore managed to maintain a steady economic growth averaging 9% a year from 1960 up to 1984.

The early history of Singapore covering its settlement, political, economic, educational and social development, is well documented and its records are kept in the national archives in Singapore. But obviously missing from this massive collection are the effective contributions of women in these areas (See Appendix 2.A). Even in the 20th century, women are conveniently hidden from history since primary sources, official documents, history textbooks and novels, for example, contain scant reference to their presence and to their contributions towards the development of the colony (See Appendix 2.A). Although Chinese, Malay and Indian upper and middle class parents generally did not allow their unmarried daughters to seek outside employment, there were large numbers of women from working class homes who were gainfully employed as domestic servants or perforce, earned their living as prostitutes in the latter part of the 19th century (See Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1).

Lack of educational opportunity was one factor which contributed to the failure of women to enter successfully the employment market. It is necessary, therefore, to look at the development of the educational system in Singapore in order to understand how this situation came about.

CHAPTER 3
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN SINGAPORE FROM 1819 TO THE PRESENT DAY

3.1. Introduction

166 years have passed since the foundation of modern Singapore by Sir Stamford Raffles. Within three weeks of Raffles' landing on the then insignificant fishing village, Major Farquhar, who was appointed Resident and Commandant, reported that "inhabitants are flooding in from every quarter" (Waldhauser (1), p.5). The open door policy of the British administrators whereby immigrants of all colours and creeds were welcomed, encouraged racial and religious groups to flourish and subsequently led to the establishment and growth of both English and non-English or vernacular schools as they were then known by. Except for Malay Education which had the full support of the British Government since the foundation of the colony, English, Chinese and Tamil Education had little or no support from the authorities.

Throughout the 19th century, right up to the eve of the relinquishing of control over the colony, minimal efforts were made by the British authorities to promote education on a wide scale. The education of the masses in the three levels, primary, secondary and tertiary, was left to self-governing Singapore. Its first major effort to wipe out illiteracy and to provide opportunities for

academically-able students to proceed beyond secondary level was a rapid school building programme, starting with the establishment of a number of primary, secondary and vocational schools (See Table 3.A) and followed by technical colleges and the expansion of the university in the 1960s and 1970s.

Besides the development of primary and secondary education in the four main streams (2) namely English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil, the 1950s and 1960s also saw the phenomenal growth of, and the demand for, English schools and education by parents for their children for economic purposes. The 1970s saw the emphasis on Technical Education and the gearing of secondary pupils for employment in industry and commerce. The New Education System introduced in 1980 represents a switch in policy, with the emphasis on language proficiency and elitism. From 1980 onwards, all primary pupils are taught two languages, English and their mother tongue. A special gifted children unit was set up in order to produce a corps of highly-educated workers trained for the world of advanced technology.

In order to fully understand the development of education in multi-racial Singapore, it is essential to delve into the stages of growth of each of the main streams of education that had evolved since 1819 representing the major immigrant stocks who made up the population. Thus, this chapter will comprise 5 parts: the first 4 sections will deal with the development of English, Chinese, Malay

and Tamil Education respectively, while the last section will focus on the development of education from 1959, with the granting of self-government to the island, onwards to the system prevailing in 1984.

3.2 SECTION I: Development of English Education from 1819 to 1958

3.2.1 Education from 1819 to 1866

The Singapore Institution

As early as September 1819, Raffles wrote to the philanthropist, William Wilberforce, about his intention to establish an institution for educating the sons of the Malay chiefs and of those immigrants who had by their talents, raised themselves to a high and respectable rank in their society (3). In his letters to his cousin the Reverend Dr. Raffles on 9/10 November 1819 and 12 January 1823 (4), not only did he reveal his plan for the establishment of a native college in Singapore, but he also made a request for enlightened missionaries. This college would, besides emphasising education in the native languages, give some instruction in English and Science to those who felt the need for these two fields and could profit from the study of them. It was Raffles' hope that this college would grow into a centre for the study of the languages and cultures of South-East Asia and serve as a means of improving the moral and intellectual condition of its people.

On 12 January 1823, Raffles, upon his return to

Singapore, picked out the site for the building of his institution. A board of trustees was formed to oversee the 'Singapore Institution' and by April 1823 a sum of $17,495 was raised of which $15,000 was to be spent in putting up the building (5). The foundation stone was laid by Raffles on 5 June 1823 and the institution was to receive a grant of $300 a month, a large block of land on which the institution was to be built plus a free gift of land 600 ft. by 1140 ft. on the seafront, from the E.I.Co.

Three days after the founding of his institution, Raffles left Singapore and was succeeded by Resident Crawford. On 20 May 1823 Raffles wrote to the Governor-General of Bengal, Lord Hastings, to call his attention to the advantage and propriety of educating the immigrants of his colony. But on 6 November of that year, Lord Hastings replied cautioning Raffles about the speed with which he was projecting his idea since the problem of the possession of Singapore had not been settled with the Dutch. The Court of Directors of the E.I.Co. not only felt that Raffles' concept of establishing a native college was then premature but also called upon Crawford to report on the feasibility of such a project by his ambitious predecessor.

In his report, Crawford expressed his view that the scheme was too ambitious, lacking the means to be carried through successfully. Instead, he suggested that the authorities should concentrate on elementary education

which should be confined to Reading, Writing and Arithmetic in English (1). His recommendations were endorsed by the Governor-General of Bengal and with the trustees unable to raise further funds, the project was finally abandoned. For eleven years up to 1834, the partly completed building became a haven for thieves.

The London Missionary Society

The ground work in establishing English Education had been laid by the various Christian missionaries while propagating their faiths. The three main groups were namely: (a) The London Missionary Society (LMS), (b) The American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and (c) The Roman Catholic French Society of Foreign Missions.

A most significant factor in the development of English Popular Education in the 19th century was the evangelical movement (6). This had grown out of the religious revival of the second half of the 18th century, and, as Wardle (6) points out, was characterised by a strong sense of social responsibility which led its followers to show a powerful missionary zeal. This had led to a number of missionaries deciding not only to devote their attention to the Sunday school movement in Britain but also to evangelise and teach in the remote regions of the East.

As early as 1819, the LMS had made its mark in the

history of Singapore with the arrival of Reverend Samuel Milton who distributed Christian books and pamphlets in Chinese, being proficient in that language. He was soon followed by Reverend and Mrs. G.H.Thomsen who opened a school in a house at the corner of North Bridge Road and Bras Basah Road in 1822. Both being knowledgeable in Malay, Reverend Thomsen taught a class of six boys while Mrs. Thomsen, a class of six girls and these twelve pupils were given instruction in both English and Malay.

By 1829, the LMS was operating four schools: a Cantonese school at Kampong Glam with 12 boys, a Cantonese school at Pekin Street with 8 boys, a Hokkien school at Pekin Street with 22 boys and an English school at Pekin Street with 48 boys (1). In 1842, the Reverend and Mrs. Dyer opened St. Margaret's School which was a Chinese Girls' Day School and a girls' boarding school.

However, the good work started by the LMS was short-lived, this being due to the fact that its interest lay primarily in evangelical work and the comparatively small population of Singapore (about 60,000 in the 1840s) was not as challenging as the millions that populated the vast mainland of China. So when China opened its doors to Western culture and religions in the 1840s, after its defeat in the Anglo-Chinese Wars, the LMS transferred its work to the Chinese mission field in 1847. With no other protestant missionary society actively operating in Singapore to whom they could hand over the fruits of their

labour, they were forced to close all the schools they had established except St. Margaret's School for girls which was looked after by Miss Grant, a member of the Society for the Promotion of Female Education in the East.

When the LMS ordered all their field workers to head for China, every one packed and left except Reverend Benjamin P. Keasberry. He had set up a small school at Rochore in 1834 where he taught a number of Malay boys to print and operate lithographic presses (1). It was a free boarding school, strictly religious in character, whereby his apprentices were bound to him for a training period lasting three to four years. As Waldhauser (1) notes, this was the first vocational school on the island, functioning under a modern system of apprenticeship agreement. The printing establishment flourished so well, Waldhauser (1) tells us, that it was maintaining Reverend Keasberry's Day School for Malay boys at Mount Zion in River Valley Road. In 1872, the school enrolled 35 Malay boys and received a very liberal grant of $77 per pupil per annum from the government which was very pleased with its progress. The death of Reverend Keasberry in 1873, however, eventually led to the closing down of the school as no LMS members were sent out to replace him and continue his good work.

The American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions

The first member of the ABCFM who came to Singapore in 1834 was Reverend Ira Tracy. Like the LMS,

the ABCFM used the island as the base for its missionary work in China. Besides establishing its first mission station here upon his arrival, Reverend Tracy also set up a Chinese Free School for Chinese boys at Bukit Pasoh. By 1837, the school which was located in the central part of the town, had attracted a total of 307 boys.

The American organisation through its medical missionary Reverend Parker had expressed its desire to establish 'Christian colonies' not only in Singapore but also at Penang and Malacca. Reverend Parker's request for a grant of land of not more than 500 acres at each of the three settlements and permission "to preach the Gospel and in a moral sense to explore the country and to report such means as we deem calculated to evangelise the heathen" (Waldhauser (1), p.18) met with opposition from the authorities both in Bengal and London. However, when the Chinese mission field opened in 1842, all its members began to turn their attention to China. All but one left; Reverend Dickenson remained behind for, in April 1840, he had joined the Singapore Institution Free School. But even he left in September 1843 when his health broke down.

The Roman Catholic Missions

In 1821, the Bishop of Siam sent Father Laurent Marie Joseph Imbert of the Societé des Missions Étrangères to Singapore to find out the state of the Catholic religion in the colony. Father Imbert who stayed a week on the

island later wrote back to say that there were only twelve or thirteen Catholics in Singapore who needed spiritual guidance.

Eleven years later, the Resident Councillor of Singapore, Mr. Samuel G. Bonham, put by a piece of land along Bras Basah Road for the building of a church. The enlarged Catholic community contributed to the building of a little chapel which in 1852 was used to house the first boys' school (1). It was to Father Jean Marie Beurel of St. Brieuc in Brittany that the credit goes for encouraging and developing education for both children of Catholic and non-Catholic families. He came to Singapore in 1839 and stayed for a period of thirty years during which he was responsible, together with Father Hillary Courvezy, Canon of Chartres, for the building of the present Cathedral of the Good Shepherd and the establishment of a school for boys and a school for girls. For the schools to function effectively, it was necessary for him to make a trip home to France to recruit teachers to teach in Singapore. On 28 March 1852, he returned to Singapore from Paris with 6 brothers, 4 sisters, a lay sister and 2 young missionaries (1). Three of the brothers made their way to Penang to work there so it was with the remaining three that the first Roman Catholic school was opened on 1 May 1852. On 19 March 1855, the foundation stone was laid for the building of St. Joseph's School for boys. It took 11 years to build this school which was completed in 1868. Meanwhile the school received a grant of 1,000 francs a year from the French

Government for its upkeep.

Reactivation of the 'Singapore Institution'

In 1834, concern over the lack of interest in the education of children in Singapore led to the establishment of the Singapore School Society by Anglican philanthrophy. Spearheaded by Reverend F.J. Darragh, the Chaplain, the Singapore Free School was opened in April 1834 after a sum of £355 was colected to start off the project. This 'Free School' was opened to all children in the colony regardless of colour or creed. Pupils had to pay a nominal fee while the government offered a small grant for its maintenance. The Singapore School Society, which was formed on 25 September 1834, was given the task of supervising this and other elementary schools to be set up later on. The Singapore Free Press reports that on that date, there were 32 pupils in English classes, 18 in the Tamil class, 12 in the Malay class and 12 in the Chinese class (1).

The religious overtones of the Singapore School Society did not gain the support of the rich and influential merchants in Singapore. They opposed particularly the Society's intention to set up 'Charity schools' for the education of the poor. They were of the opinion that no one religion should form the basis of instruction given in schools. At the same time, interest in the revival of Raffles' institution gained momentum and a new group of influential citizens decided to rebuild the

Institution building which was abandoned a decade before. For a start, the Singapore Free School shifted its premises from High Street to the Institution building. By May 1838, it had an enrolment of 273 pupils of which 71 were in the English classes, 106 in Chinese classes, 50 in Malay classes and 46 in Tamil classes (1).

First named the 'Singapore Institution Free School' it was later renamed 'Singapore Institution' in 1856, then Raffles Institution to perpetuate the memory of the man who had first mooted the idea of an institution open to the best students and as a centre for educational and cultural development of its people. The pupils were taught English, Arithmetic (including book-keeping), History, Chronology, Natural History and Philosophy, Geometry, Mensuration, Trigonometry, the use of the globe, Writing and Drawing in the English classes.

Although it faced many ups and downs in the early years of its establishment, particularly with the lack of capable and highly qualified teachers, insufficient supply of suitable textbooks and teaching aids, the absence of sound educational policy, objectives and guidelines, it managed to pull through with adequate financial support from its trustees and especially the government in power.

3.2.2 Education from 1867 to 1958

The cosmopolitan make-up of its people from the the period 1819 to 1866 and the gradual but ever-

increasing prosperity of the island through its entrepôt trade, shaped the progress of its educational development. The British authorities, although practising the doctrine of 'laissez-faire' which had shaped official attitudes to educational activities in Britain in the earlier part of the 19th century and which was extended to all parts of the British Empire, cannot be said not to have had a hand in deciding the stages of growth in the field of education in Singapore. Raffles' intention to establish a Malay college was thwarted, as was Reverend Parker's attempt to establish Christian colonies in the Straits Settlements. Where schemes initiated were found to be practical, sound and for the general good of the immigrant natives, they not only had the blessing of the government but were subsidised by government grants as in the case of the Singapore Institution Free School and numerous Malay schools for Malay boys.

From 1867 onwards, with the inception of the Legislative Council in Singapore, the affairs of the colony as well as Malacca and Penang, came under the purview of the Council and the Secetary of State for the Colonies. Two years later in 1869, a select committee of the Legislative Council was appointed to study the expenditure on education. The E.E. Isemonger Committee later reported that the grants allocated to the various schools were insufficient to provide for the development of a sound educational system and much waste had resulted due to the absence of a co-ordinated system (1).

The following year saw the appointment of a second select committee, the Woolley Committee which was to delve into the whole subject of education in Singapore. The Woolley Committee not only reported that Malay Education had failed to make much progress but also recommended a complete re-organisation of the existing educational establishments and the appointment of a Director of Education with wide powers to oversee the supervision, organisation and management of all schools in Singapore (7). As an alternative to re-organisation of the existing educational establishments, the Woolley Committee suggested leaving the schools as they were but efforts be made to improve them gradually. The Committee found the pupil-teacher system prevailing at that time to be satisfactory and made no recommendation for the establishment of a normal school for training teachers.

The report of the Woolley Committee was an initial attempt to bring about some much needed changes in educational institutions, but owing to the lack of interest on the part of the authorities in London and to the lack of funds, no action whatsoever was taken after the submission of the report. However, as recommended by the Committee, a Director of Education and an Inspector of Schools was appointed in 1872. Mr. A.M. Skinner, Acting Magistrate in Province Wellesley was made the first Inspector of Schools and he held the post for thirty years.

When A.M. Skinner took charge of the newly created

Department of Education in 1872, no government schools were yet in existence. There were only English and vernacular schools established by missionary and private individuals or organisations. He organised the English schools into six standards, the highest being the sixth. Subjects taught in these schools were Reading, Writing and Arithmetic classified as ordinary school subjects while History, Geography, Algebra, Malay, Chinese, French, German, Music and Drawing were known as extra subjects. In 1891, a seventh standard was added - this being the highest. This was introduced in conjunction with the introduction of the Cambridge Local Examinations in that year.

On 1 August 1863, England had introduced the system of 'payment by results'. The teachers were paid on a commission basis with a basic salary and a portion of the government grant earned by the scholars (6). The intention was to stimulate teachers to produce good results at the annual examinations, thus increasing the grants to the schools or controlling bodies. Although this system prevailed for thirty years in Britain, it was much criticised by both teachers and leading educators (6). "The principle of 'payment by result' does not suit the interests of schools and their instruction because too much reliance is placed on mechanical processes and too little on intelligence", wrote Matthew Arnold in his 1867 General Report (8). In 1874, however, the Singapore Legislative Council decided to adopt the scheme. Waldhauser (1) tells us that grants were given on three heads: for results

obtained at inspection, for average attendance and as a 'fixed' grant, which was the difference between the grant paid to a school before 1874 and that earned by it under the first two heads. In the case of poor results, 'fixed' grants were withdrawn from 1879.

Under pressure from the teachers' organisations and the school boards with the larger ones taking the lead, the scheme was phased out in Britain in the 1890s (6). In Singapore, it made its disappearance with the Education Code of 1899 which instead introduced 4 types of grants namely: special grants, salary grants, maintenance grants and grants on the results of examinations. Besides emphasising the importance of teaching English, other main aims of the new system were: to make grants dependent on general efficiency rather than on individual passes; to encourage philanthropic and missionary groups to undertake the work of education by 'liberal examination grants' and 'building grants' and, to establish a system of grants to aid in the preparation of pupil-teachers (8). Schools were then put into three different grades according to their overall efficiency and the grants given to them depended on the grade on which they were placed.

An attempt was made in 1902 to inquire into the system of English Education in Singapore with special reference to Secondary and Technical Education and this was carried out by the Kynnersley Commission. It was necessary at this stage to study the implications of emphasising

English and Technical Education especially as there was a growing demand for clerks in commercial establishments who were expected to be able to have a fairly good command of English and Arithmetic (9).

Where the 1902 Balfour Act shaped the educational policy in Britain, so the Kynnersley Commission Report which formed the basis of the 1902 Education Code, shaped British educational policy in Singapore until the 1920s (1). Based on the recommendations of the Commission, Raffles Institution became the first government secondary school on 1 January 1903 and a number of new government 'feeder' schools to Raffles Institution were built (1).

Another significant development of the 1902 Education Code was the establishment in 1909 of the Education Board which had 8 members and was headed by the Director of Education. The primary function of the board was to assist the government in controlling educational expenditure. The first two decades of the 20th century also saw the emphasis on English and the use of the direct method of teaching it; the establishment of kindergartens; the opening of some commercial classes; the introduction of Physical Education in Schools and the introduction of medical inspection of pupils (1).

In 1919 the Lemon Committee was appointed. As a result of its investigations, a Chief Inspector of Schools was appointed and the salaries of missionary teachers were

fixed at a flat rate while more financial assistance was given to aided schools for new buildings and equipment required by them (10). Another outcome of the 1919 Commission's report was the Registration of Schools Ordinance of 1920 which gave the government overall power to supervise all schools then in operation as well as to control the establishment of new schools (10). When the Ordinance became law on 27 October 1920, the committee members and teachers of a number of Chinese schools who could not see themselves being subjected to foreign control resigned, resulting in the closing down of many schools. The major factors that led to the enactment of this controversial ordinance are discussed in Section 3.3 on the development of Chinese Education in Singapore.

Credit must be given to the non-European private merchants, entrepreneurs and leading citizens for their public-spiritedness in initiating higher education in the colony. In 1904, they sent a petition to the Governor of the Straits Settlements Sir John Anderson drawing his attention to the need to establish a Medical School. In his reply, the Governor promised to raise the issue with the Legislative Council of the Colony and of the Federated Malay States if the petitioners could muster $71,000 towards the project (11). The non-European communities soon collected the necessary funds and the Medical School formally began taking in students in mid 1905.

Another boost to English Education was the

establishment of Raffles College. It opened its doors to admit students in 1928 providing higher education in Arts and Science. The following year saw the opening of the first government trade school. It provided three-year courses in Mechanics and Steam fitting, Electricity, Domestic Arts and Radio-engineering.

No organisational changes of great significance took place during the period 1929 up to 1941 while 1942 to 1945 were the years of Japanese occupation of Singapore whereby educational activities suffered a setback. While a number of schools were taken over by the conquerors and used for military or administrative purposes, the remaining schools which re-opened a few months later, reported drastic drops in attendance. Only a few thousand attended schools throughout the occupation period where the number had been seventy-two thousand before the war.

In September 1945 almost immediately after the liberation, most schools were re-opened as well as the College of Medicine and Raffles College. In 1946, the 'Ten Years Programme' for 'Education Policy in the Colony of Singapore' was mooted and adopted by the Advisory Council on 7 August 1947 (12). The three general principles of the Ten Year Programme were as follows:

(a) That education should aim at fostering and extending the capacity for self-government, and the ideal of civic loyalty and responsibility;
(b) that equal educational opportunity should be afforded to the children - both boys and girls - of all races;

> (c) that upon a basis of free primary education there should develop such secondary, vocational and higher education as will best meet the needs of the country.
> (Waldhauser (1), p.47)

Other implications outlined by the Programme include:

> (a) Universal free six-year primary education for all children;
> (b) emphasis on the teaching of the mother tongue in the first two years in Malay, Chinese and Tamil schools and English to be incorporated in the third year in these schools;
> (c) the freedom of all parents to choose the types of schools and medium of instruction they prefer for their children;
> (d) all schools should discard their distinctive 'racial' trait and instead be developed as 'regional' schools;
> (e) there was to be the establishment of post secondary classes;
> (f) except for a number of existing efficient girls' schools which are allowed to remain status quo, all boys' schools are to take in girl pupils and co-education is to be practised in all new schools;
> (g) only those likely to pass the School Certificate examination, would be admitted to the secondary course; and,
> (h) the continuation of grants-in-aid to mission and other bodies, 'per capita' grants to Chinese and Tamil schools and the registration of private schools (1).

In 1955, an All-Party Committee of the Singapore Legislative Council was appointed to look into the problems of education. Only the year before, Chinese middle-school students had rioted over Chinese Education. Language and Education became particularly sensitive issues after World War Two with the anti-colonial movement (13). Reassertion of one's own language and culture was the other side of the revolt against domination by foreign powers and "the emotions of Singaporeans were often held in thrall by the

Chinese, Malay and Tamil language chauvinists" (Lee (13), p. iii).

The Committee recommended :

(a) the integration of the different and separate kinds of schools then functioning in Singapore;
(b) equal treatment for the four language streams of education; that is, Malay, Chinese, English and Tamil;
(c) equality of grants, conditions of service and salary to be extended to all Government and Government-aided schools;
(d) the establishment of common curricula and syllabuses for all the schools with the increasing use of Malaya-centred textbooks;
(e) the teaching of Ethics to all pupils in all schools;
(f) the intermingling of students from various language streams in the field of sports with the aim of building a multi-racial society; and,
(g) the introduction of Bilingual Education in primary schools and Trilingual Education in secondary schools (14).

These recommendations formed the main points embodied in the White Paper on Education which was published in April 1956.

Following this, a Joint Advisory Council for Apprenticeship Training was set up in 1956 which established two Technical Secondary Schools, one Secondary Commercial School in that year and one Chinese Primary and one Chinese Secondary School in January 1956. By the end of 1957, the Department of Education which was converted to a Ministry of Education, had seen to the building of a record 96 new primary and 11 new secondary schools. In the same year, two session schools was started and in 1958, the Singapore Polytechnic was opened.

3.3 SECTION II: Development of Chinese Education from 1819 to 1958

3.3.1 Chinese Education prior to 1900

Although the main aim of the majority of the early Chinese immigrants in Singapore was to try to make their fortune here and then return to their homeland to enjoy their retirement in comfort, thus creating a transitory stock of settlers, they did not neglect their duty to establish some form of education for their children, that is, boys, born locally. This was in keeping with the traditional Chinese respect for learning: an inscription on the walls of a Chinese school in 1861 states, "If we do not educate them (i.e. the children), how would they be expected to appreciate the righteous path of our sages" (Gwee (15), Op.Cit. p.82).

The earliest written record of the number of Chinese schools in early 19th century Singapore, was made by the Reverend G.H. Thomsen who reported in 1829 that there was a Cantonese school at Kampong Glam and one in Pekin Street and a Hokkien school at Pekin Street. The Chinese Free School in Amoy Street where the above inscription was found, was built in 1854 (15). There were lesser known schools but two notable ones were the Tao-nan hsueh-t'ang which later became known as the Holy Innocents Boys' School, established in 1872, and the Yu-lan shu-shih which was established in 1889. The Holy Innocents Boys' School was set up by the Roman Catholic Mission which also supported a

Chinese school in Bukit Timah, while the latter was a clan school (15).

Unlike the early mission schools where the teachers sent out from England and France were quite well qualified for their jobs, the calibre of Chinese teachers employed by private bodies for decades was questionable. Many, Gwee (15) tells us, were not professionals but quacks, fortune-tellers and, in particular unsuccessful examination candidates from China who took to teaching as a final resort having failed in other enterprises. The children were thus not adequately prepared to serve the needs of the new colony with its emphasis on commerce. What was generally taught in China were directly practised in Singapore. The Trimetrical Classic, the Book of Filial Piety, the Four Books and the Five Classics formed the basis of their syllabi together with a little letter writing and the use of the abacus (15). Teachers frequently used the rod to maintain discipline and the children were subjected to rote-learning.

As time went by, it was realised by some quarters of the community that there was a need for English to be incorporated into the curriculum in Chinese schools. The first move was made by Yen Yung-cheng (Gan Eng Seng) who established his school in 1893 in which both English and Chinese were taught to the pupils. His ambitious scheme, however, failed to bear fruit and a few years later, the school became a purely English school.

Up to the turn of the century, Chinese schools had survived on their own resources with their own syllabi and management committees and even issued individual certificates of graduation (16). Apart from the Christian missionary bodies which received donations both from their church members but mainly from their mission headquarters in Europe and the States, the remaining Chinese stream schools throughout the colony were established and maintained by Chinese clans and associations. The only Chinese school, referred to in the 1898 Annual Report on Education as a "model vernacular school", as a result of which it received a grant, was the Roman Catholic school in Bukit Timah (15).

3.3.2 Growth of Chinese Education from 1901 to 1958

The first two decades of the 20th century saw a dramatic change in the curriculum in Chinese schools and the mushrooming of Chinese schools throughout the island. The old system of education which had persisted for the last eighty years, gave way to new and revolutionary ideas which were fermenting in mainland China. There was, firstly, the movement headed by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, an intellectual and nationalist who tried to overthrow the Manchus and set up a republic. Secondly, K'ang Yu-wei attempted to bring about reforms in education in 1898. Although Dr. Sun failed in his attempt to drive out the Manchus in 1894 and K'ang also met with opposition from the conservative Manchu Government in power, the ideas thus generated as Gwee (15) points out, succeeded in instilling in the minds of the overseas

Chinese, the necessity and urgency of change in a period of 'Confucian revival'.

Influenced by these two forces at work, many new schools were established. These modern schools tried to instil upon the pupils the sense of patriotism and discipline. They were made to take part in military drills, wore smart uniforms and sang patriotic songs in schools. They learnt Ethics, Language, Arithmetic, History, Geography, Science, Drawing, Singing and Drill. Prior to the fall of the Manchu regime, emphasis was placed on the study of the Confucian classics and loyalty to the Chinese emperor but when the Chinese republic was established in 1911, the fostering of Chinese nationalism became the main theme. Commerce and handwork too were encouraged as well as the development of post-primary education. Chinese High School, the first high school was opened in 1918. A notable development of this period was the establishment of a number of girls' schools. Nan Hwa Girls' School which began in 1917, was the first school in the colony to introduce a teacher training course for its staff.

Up to now, although the British Government did not play an active part in establishing Chinese schools nor in supporting their existence, at the same time it did not interfere in their development. They were left much on their own as long as they were not involved in political activities which threatened the peace of the colony. However, the next two decades saw a change in government

policy towards Chinese schools. Where, earlier, the Chinese educationists had concentrated their efforts solely on imparting knowledge to their pupils, now they began to be actively involved in activities which were frowned upon by the authorities. Two events took place in 1919 which led to the government to introduce new and drastic measures which had serious repercussions on Chinese Education. The first event related to the settlement of Japanese claims on German possessions in the Shantung Province in China (17). In protest against this unfair settlement, local Chinese Singaporeans took to the streets on 19 June 1919, in anti-Japanese demonstrations. Students, teachers and workers marched round the town seeking out Japanese shops and goods and destroying them. Many were arrested and thrown into jail. This was followed by the second event the following month, on 19 and 20 July, when the Chinese community refused to participate in the victory celebrations of the Allies in World War One.

As a check to further acts of violence and disobedience, the government swiftly intoduced legislation to control Chinese schools. The Registration of Schools Ordinance 1920 saw not only to the registration of all schools in the colony, but also the registration of all teachers and managers of all institutions and it empowered the government to declare unlawful schools which preached revolutionary ideas in conflict with the interests of the government (15). The Chinese community campaigned vigorously against the Ordinance which meant submission to

British control over Chinese schools and education, but their protests were in vain. Ultimately, a number of schools shut down and many teachers resigned from their jobs. But this set-back did not deter Chinese educationists, clans and associations from continuing to support those schools which did not participate in the protest. From mainland China came moral support from the ruling party and with the introduction in 1923 of grants-in-aid to Chinese schools which applied for them and were willing to submit to inspection (15) more new schools began to spring up from then onwards. By 1941, there were 370 Chinese schools registered with the Department of Education with an enrolment of approximately 38,000 pupils of which one-third were made up of girls.

During the Japanese occupation of Singapore from February 1942 to September 1945, Chinese Education made no progress while large numbers of Chinese teachers were not only jobless but went into hiding. They had been actively involved in anti-Japanese activities prior to the Pacific War and fearing retribution for their involvement, did not dare to return to teaching even after the Japanese authorities had ordered the Chinese schools to re-open four months after their conquest of the island.

When the Second World War was won by the Allies, English, Malay, Tamil and Chinese schools began to function again and attempts were made by the government to establish a more uniform system of education as outlined in the Ten

Years Plan discussed in Section I, sub-section 3.2.2 of this chapter. The government found difficulty in converting Chinese schools immediately into government or government-aided institutions for free primary education or in converting them into regional schools for children of all races due to the fact that their school terms and holidays were fixed by tradition and religion and that they were mainly supported by the Chinese communities themselves.

By 1953, Tamil schools were receiving the same grants as the English schools while the Malay schools were wholly supported by the government. Thus the Chinese schools began to demand for more grants-in-aid. The Department of Education welcomed their move but the schools needed to fulfil 2 basic conditions, namely that their courses were to be designed as: (a) to give all their pupils a working knowledge of English as well as Chinese; and (b) to turn out good citizens of this colony rather than just good Europeans or good Chinese (15).

The White Paper of December 1953 (18) contained the above two conditions as well as a suggestion that the schools should,

> ..aim at a curriculum in which the time devoted to the teaching of English and of other subjects in the medium of English would be in the primary school at least one-third, in the junior middle school one-half, and in the senior middle school two-thirds of the total teaching time. Arithmetic in the higher primary classes and Mathematics and Science in the middle school are subjects which might conveniently be taught in English.
>
> (Gwee (15), p.92)

These clauses were unacceptable to the majority of Chinese teachers especially those who felt their rice-bowls threatened with the replacement of Chinese-medium classes by English-medium classes. Thus, only a few schools accepted the increased aid offered.

Widespread student unrest broke out in 1954 spearheaded by the Singapore Chinese Middle School Students' Union. This resulted in the 1955 All-Party Committee Report which recommended the integration of all the different and separate types of schools in Singapore. The major implications and suggestions of the report were outlined in Section I, sub-section 3.2.2 of this chapter.

A boost to the development of Chinese Education was the establishment of the Nanyang University which was built on the crest of Chinese chauvinism and funds (16). The 500 acres site was donated by the Singapore Hokkien Community Guild. It was formally opened on 15 March 1956, with the faculties of Arts, Science and Commerce. Besides providing further education for secondary school graduates to meet the growing need for higher education, the university was to be the training centre for teachers for secondary schools. Prior to the establishment of Nanyang University, parents who wanted their children to receive Chinese tertiary education, had to send them to universities in China.

3.4 SECTION III: Development of Malay Education from 1819 to 1958

3.4.1 Malay Education from 1819 to 1900

In the 13th and 14th centuries, Arab merchants had found their way to the Indonesian islands of Sumatra and Java, Borneo, the Malay Archipelago and even Singapore. Later they began to propagate Islam which was accepted by many of the natives in these countries. When Malacca grew into an important port and trading centre in the 15th century, Islam was brought there through Sumatra. Malacca later became the centre of Islam in the Malay Peninsula and from Malacca, Islam missionaries travelled to the other states of the Peninsula to preach to the indigenous people there (19). Thus when the Temenggong of Johore came with his folllowers to settle in Singapore in 1811, they brought Islam with them (20). Eight years later, when Raffles set foot on the island, there probably existed a few Islamic schools whereby the boys and even a number of girls of noble families, were taught the Arabic alphabet, the main prayers in Arabic and the basic tenets and practices of the religion (20). The teachings of Islam were thus incorporated in Malay Education from as early as the beginning of the 19th century.

Before Islamic schools were more widely established in the colony, it was not unusual for pupils to gather at the homes of the religious teacher where they received private tuition or for the teacher to go to the

homes of the pupils and teach them. The village mosque was commonly used as a place of instruction too. In order to understand and appreciate the finer meanings of the texts in the Qur'an, it was generally accepted by the Malay population that Arabic be taught in schools. Malay, the native language of the indigenous people then played a secondary role in education. Raffles who had himself mastered the Malay language and found it ".. a beautiful language; further it is of great utility" (Zahoor Ahmad (20), p.101), had desired to promote its use more widely when he tried to establish the Singapore Institution but unfortunately, his plan was upset when the Governor-General of Bengal did not sanction it. However, this did not deter Malay Education from further development. In fact, Islamic teaching, Zahoor Ahmad (20) tells us, grew even stronger as a counter-reaction to the introduction of Western-type formal education.

It was through private tutoring that Malay Education began in Singapore. Education in Malay was first conducted for European officers and missionaries and not for Malay children (20). However, the first formal instruction given to Malay boys in Malay was in the Singapore Free School when in August 1834, it recorded 12 boys on its roll. By 1840, the school had 41 Malay boys in its class and five teachers in the Malay department. This upsurge and development was to prove short-lived for two years later, the department closed down due to the great apathy and even prejudice which existed among the Malays towards receiving

instruction, especially under foreign teachers (20).

An attempt to revive interest in Malay Education was made by Governor Blundell and the Temenggong of Johore who each made a donation of $1,500 for encouraging education of the Malay youth. The two sums helped to keep Reverend Keasberry's private vocational school for Malay boys at River Valley Road going and also saw to the opening of 2 Malay Day Schools: one at Telok Blanga and the other at Kampong Glam in 1856. In 1876, the Malay Day School at Telok Blanga became a Malay High School with an English and an industrial class and two years later, a training college for Malay teachers.

The first attempt to separate instruction of the Qur'an from instruction in the Malay language came about in 1872. Upon his appointment as the first Inspector of Schools in the Straits Settlements, A.M. Skinner encouraged the opening of a number of Malay language schools where emphasis was placed on the teaching of the Qur'an in the schools but this was to be taught in the afternoon while the morning was devoted to instruction in Malay (20). Meanwhile, parents were encouraged to contribute to the salary of the Qur'an teacher while the Malay teacher received an allowance from the government.

An incentive to encourage interest in the study of English among Malay pupils was applied through the award of four scholarships to outstanding Malay boys in 1874 to

attend Raffles Institution. The scholarships were tenable for a year and each scholar was to receive $3 monthly.

Pressure had to be asserted through the village council to draw pupils to attend Malay schools since Malay parents were generally reluctant to allow their children to go to school which they felt would not only imbue their offspring with Western ideas but also fail to inculcate in them Islamic ideals in their teachings. This conflict of ideals was to prove detrimental to the course of Malay Education for in 1895, as the outcome of the investigations of the E.E. Isemonger Committee of 1893, 22 Malay boys' schools with less than 15 pupils on their rolls were axed. The Malay College, first established in 1878, also met with the same fate that year.

3.4.2 Malay Education from 1901 to 1958

Unlike Chinese and Tamil Education which were left to struggle for their existence for over a century, Malay Education had since the early years of the 19th century received assistance from the British Government. Beyond their felt obligations to the Malays, the British saw no reason for providing funds to the other communities (21). Free elementary education was given to Malay pupils and Malay schools were not coerced into instructing their pupils in the English language.

Some progress in Malay Education was seen particularly from 1916 onwards when R.O. Winstedt was

appointed Director of Education of Singapore and the Federated Malay States. He believed that Malay Education should be developed on practical industrial lines and set about introducing new subjects into the school curriculum such as Gardening, Mat-making, Netting and Basketry for boys and Cooking, Sewing and Basketry for girls, besides mastery of the 3 Rs. To qualify for a School Leaving Certificate both boys and girls were required to pass the 3Rs plus one of the practical subjects listed above respectively. Pupils were also encouraged to develop an interest in agriculture and the business of the kampongs, or villages (20). This new curriculum initiated by Winstedt had two objectives: the first was to prepare Malay children for life in their own communities and secondly, in the case of the more intelligent pupils, to provide the groundwork for admission into one of the existing English schools.

The period 1942 to 1945 also temporarily disrupted the development of Malay Education. Although Malay schools were allowed to function during the Japanese occupation without harrassment, few schools were opened and fewer pupils attended classes. The re-occupation of Singapore by the British in September 1945, saw the opening of all Malay schools but progress in this stream continued to be slow. A prime factor detrimental to its development was the Ten Years Programme which encouraged Malay parents to send their sons and daughters, if possible, to English schools. As a result, only 476 boys and 250 girls sat for the Primary School Leaving Examinations (PSLE) by 1958 (20). These

figures did not justify the establishment of Malay secondary schools - another setback for the growth of Malay Education.

The inadequate supply of Malay teachers and disregard for the advantages of education for girls were two prominent factors which contributed to the comparatively negligible progress in Malay Education for decades. Singapore had to rely on two colleges in Malaya, the Sultan Idris College at Tanjong Malim in Perak and the Women's College at Malacca for its supply of qualified Malay teachers. Meanwhile, the attitudes of Malay parents towards the education of their daughters left many illiterate and the small number that were given the privilege to attend schools could not make up the number required, for the establishment of secondary schools which would contribute to further development of Malay Education. Further discussion regarding the education of Malay girls will be presented in Chapter 4.

3.5 SECTION IV: Development of Tamil Education from 1819 to 1958

3.5.1 Tamil Education from 1819 to 1900

The first Indians who came to settle in Singapore probably arrived with Sir Stamford Raffles in 1819 in his employ. By 1821, there were 132 Indians among the rapidly growing population and these were mainly Tamil-speaking Indians from the southern part of India. Unlike the Chinese

who soon dominated the population, the percentage of Indians in the 19th century and throughout the last eighty years of the 20th century had remained below 10% of the total population in the colony.

When the Singapore Free School opened in August 1834, it started a class for Tamil pupils. Thus the first formal education for Indian children who were taught the Tamil language was established. There were 18 boy pupils registered at the beginning of the class, but the following year, the class ceased to function. A contributory factor was the inadequate supply of suitable textbooks.

In 1837, there was renewed interest to re-start the Tamil class in the school now known as the Singapore Institution Free School. In May 1838, 46 Indian boys registered for the class but by the end of the year, it again shut down due to a number of factors, the main ones being lack of support from the British authorities, the lack of interest of parents in educating their children who were more of a financial asset to them at work than at school and the doubtful quality of the teachers (22).

Meanwhile some effort was made by the Christian missions to educate Indian boys. In 1859, the Roman Catholic Missions established St. Francis Xavier Malabar School but it met with the same fate as the two previous attempts made. However, Our Lady of Lourdes Anglo-Tamil School for boys which was opened in 1885 managed to survive

for 19 years till 1904.

For 35 years from 1838 when the second Tamil class ceased to function, no move was made by the government to encourage Tamil Education. The growing importance of the colony as a business centre and the acute shortage of English-speaking interpreters, hospital dispensers and clerks, however, necessitated the demand for the establishment of schools for Tamil pupils. In 1873 and 1876, 2 Anglo-Tamil schools were opened by the government. For the first time, these schools provided the means of learning English through the medium of the Tamil language (22). These schools were intended primarily to prepare pupils for admission into Raffles Institution to continue their studies in English but Doray (22) tells us that less than 5% of the pupils continued their education up to Standard Six (the highest standard then). With such a low percentage, it was not thought necessary by the government, to emphasise the teaching of Tamil therefore the two schools eventually concentrated on the teaching of English and became known as Preparatory English Schools.

3.5.2 The Period 1901 to 1958

In 1913, the Methodist Mission opened a Mission Estate School particularly for the children of Tamil labourers working on rubber estates in the colony (22). The government soon realised the needs of the children of labourers for some form of educational guidance so in 1923,

the Labour Ordinance was passed whereby it was the responsibility of all employers, be it an estate or factory, to build and run a school for his employees' children. This stipulation under the Labour Ordinance applied in cases where there were 10 or more children of any one race between the ages of seven and fourteen. These estate schools as they came to be known, came under the purview of the Education Department and they also qualified for grants-in-aid from the government depending on their standard of efficiency (22). Schools received the grants calculated on a per capita basis. Normally, the rate was $8 per pupil per annum and only pupils in the age range of five to fourteen years were included in the count.

In 1920, there was only one Tamil school but by 1941, the number had shot up to 18 with a total enrolment of one thousand pupils. Where other vernacular schools displayed a low profile during the Japanese occupation, a number of the Tamil schools were opened during that period by Labour unions. In India, the population was agitating for independence. These schools were thus used as propaganda centres of the Indian Independence Movement in Singapore (22). The quality of teaching in these schools left much to be desired with the unions employing teachers with no qualifications whatsoever.

After the war, except for mission Tamil schools which were financially able to manage themselves, all non-mission Tamil schools were insolvent. They were unable

to pay the salaries of their teachers and the government stepped in to the rescue. The deteriorating state of Tamil Education managed to arouse the interest of a number of prominent Indians in the community who got together in 1949 and formed the Tamil Education Society. With the objective of re-organising and re-vitalising the Tamil educational system, Doray (22) notes that the Society took over the management of 11 of the 18 registered Tamil schools which were soon re-opened to take in pupils. Besides supervision of these 11 schools the Society also assumed responsibility for some 20 unregistered schools which it brought under its wing. Each school had a Committee of Management to supervise its administration and the Society also succeeded in recruiting a number of qualified teachers from India to run the better established schools. Thus a great boost was given to Tamil Education as a result of the work and contribution of the Society.

The attempt by the Tamil Education Society to revive Tamil Education in the colony met with approval from the government. Capitation grants were made to the Society to assist in the daily management of the schools while aid to cover the cost of teachers' salaries at rates approved according to their qualifications and experience were also given (22). By 1951, the number of registered schools had risen from 12 to 20.

However, the anticipated progress in Tamil Education did not materialise due to a number of factors

namely, the shortage of fully-trained and qualified staff, the unavailability of suitable textbooks, the lack of attention given to curriculum planning where only a limited number of subjects were taught and particularly, the failure of the Committee of Management of schools to carry out their tasks effectively. The standard of Tamil Education in many schools made no headway with their committees whose members gave only lip service to their inadequacies.

3.6 SECTION V: Development of the Educational system from 1959 to the present day

3.6.1 Some important changes that took place in the 1960s and 1970s

3 June 1959 saw the birth of internal self-government in Singapore. The year 1959 thus marks the beginning of a most significant phase in the colony as the first locally-elected PAP Government had full control over education. A diverse and decentralised system of education had prevailed throughout the colony from 1819 right up to 1955, when the first attempts were made at consolidating the four different streams of education under a centralised system of control, as recommended by the 1955 All-Party Committee of the Singapore Legislative Council, after the turbulent early 1950s which saw Chinese secondary students protesting and rioting against British administration.

In its election manifesto in 1959, the PAP pledged to establish an egalitarian socialist society in which all

the major races and languages would be given equal treatment (23). In its first Five Year Plan, the four main objectives in education were stated to be:

> (a) Equal treatment for the 4 main educational streams mainly, English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil;
> (b) establishment of 4 official languages with Malay as the national language of the new nation in an attempt to unify the multi-racial community;
> (c) emphasis on the study of Mathematics, Science and Technical subjects designed to equip the youth with the requisite skills, aptitudes and attitudes for employment in the industrial sector; and,
> (d) the building of loyalty to the nation.
>
> (Goh (16), p.2-1)

In its enthusiasm to encourage all parents to send their children to school, not forgetting its promise to the electorate that a place would be found for every child, male or female, the PAP Government swiftly saw to the implementation of a school building programme. Primary, secondary, vocational and technical schools were built to provide accommodation for the ever-increasing pupil population. Table 3.A shows that a total of 83 new school buildings and 7 major extensions to existing schools were completed during the period 1959 to 1965.

TABLE 3.A

SCHOOL BUILDING PROGRAMME 1959-1965

Year	Primary Schools	Vocational Secondary Schools	Academic Secondary Schools	Technical Secondary Schools	Total	Extensions
1959	1	-	-	-	1	-
1960	4	-	-	-	4	1
1961	6	-	3	-	9	-
1962	11	1	3	-	15	-
1963	9	1	3	3	16	5
1964	6	7	5	4	22	-
1965	6	3	7	-	16	1

(Source: MOE, Singapore. 1966)

One of the first steps taken by the new government to introduce a uniform system of education which brought the four main streams of education under a common curriculum, was the initiation of a compulsory examination for all Primary Six pupils at the end of their sixth year in primary school. Pupils from all the four streams had to sit for the PSLE conducted by the Ministry of Education (MOE) to qualify for a place in a secondary school of their respective stream. They were examined in a first language - the stream to which they belonged, Mathematics, Science and a General Paper in the Examinations.

The Chinese schools by the 1950s had incorporated a 6-3-3 system, that is 6 years of primary school, 3 years of secondary and 3 years of post secondary in preparation for entry to the Nanyang University. Each Chinese secondary school had conducted its own examinations and awarded its own certificates. The absence of uniformity in the marking and grading systems and the reliability of the results of

the examinations conducted, were questionable. Therefore, in order to establish equal treatment between English and Chinese secondary school leavers, the Government Secondary 4 (Chinese) Examination was introduced in 1962, in place of the Chinese Senior Middle III. The Government Secondary 4 (Chinese) Certificate awarded by the Singapore MOE, was to have equal status with the Cambridge GCE 'O' Level Certificate awarded to English stream pupils. For those pupils aspiring to continue on to tertiary education, the pre-university period was curtailed to 2 years in line with the English stream pre-university course. At the end of the two years, successful candidates were awarded GCE 'A' Local Certificates for Chinese Schools which have equal status with GCE 'A' Cambridge Certificates for English schools (16).

Having solved the problem of disparity between English and Chinese schools, the biggest of the three vernacular groups, the government next turned its attention to the Malay and Tamil streams. In 1963, the MOE conducted the first School Certificate 'O' Level Examinations for these two streams. That year also saw to the implementation of a uniform 6-4-2 education system for all schools , that is, 6 years of primary school, 4 years of secondary and 2 years of pre-university education for those pupils aiming to enter colleges and the university. Thus by 1971, the government had succeeded in establishing a uniform educational system in which all the four major streams followed a common curricula and syllabi and Secondary Four

pupils first sat for a common GCE 'O' Level Examinations.

By 1970, the integration of the different and separate kinds of schools, as recommended by the 1955 All-Party Committee (See Section 3.2.2 of this chapter), was accomplished. Except for English schools which consist of English stream classes and a number of Chinese schools which consist of Chinese stream classes exclusively, Chinese, Malay and Tamil schools, due to falling rolls, consist of Chinese and English stream classes, Malay and English stream classes and Tamil and English stream classes respectively. From the 1950s onwards Chinese, Malay and Tamil parents began sending their children to English schools in the realisation that an English Education was beneficial to their children's future career prospects.

Streaming has been part and parcel of the Singapore educational system. Since the inception of the PSLE in 1960, successful candidates have been channelled to academic, technical and vocational streams depending on the results of their performances in that examination. The outcomes of this policy of streaming may be seen in the tertiary education system where students according to ability and aptitude, are channelled to Technical Education or higher education or teacher training.

Prior to 1956 when a Joint Advisory Council for Apprenticeship Training was set up which resulted in the building of 2 Technical Secondary Schools and one Secondary

Commercial School, little emphasis was placed on either Vocational or Technical Education. However, a major step taken by the PAP Government to encourage the establishment of these two branches of education, was seen in the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry into Vocational and Technical Education in January 1961. Based on the findings of the Commission, Craft courses conducted by the Singapore Polytechnic were transferred to the Balestier Junior Trade School whose name was changed to the Singapore Vocational Institute in June 1963 (24). This paved the way for the less academically capable secondary pupils to qualify for the courses conducted by the Institute. For those brighter students who could cope with tertiary level work, opportunities were provided for them to seek entry to the Singapore Polytechnic which was to raise its professional courses to degree levels and to expand substantially its technician courses (24).

Another outcome of the 1961 Inquiry was the rapid building programme that got under way. By 1966, there were 9 Secondary Technical Schools and 12 Secondary Vocational Schools. Pupils who had failed the PSLE and were over 14 years of age were channelled to the secondary Vocational Schools where besides the normal schools subjects, they were taught subjects like Mathematics, Woodwork, Domestic Science, Art and Crafts and Technical Drawing. Those who had successfully completed their courses were then allowed to apply for admission to the Singapore Vocational Institute to be trained as skilled craftsmen.

1968 was a year of reassessment and re-organisation of the education system (11). This was necessitated by agreement reached between the Singapore and British Governments whereby the complete British pull-out from the colony would take place in 1971 instead of 1975 as indicated by the British Government when it granted Singapore independence in 1965. To ensure economic viability, industries had to be developed rapidly while the British installations had to be commercialised or utilised profitably (11) and a workforce of trained and skilled personnel made available to fill the vacuum that would result from the pull-out. A positive step taken then was the division of the MOE into the General Education Department and the Technical Education Department set up that year.

The Technical Education Department was to administer Technical Education and Industrial Training Programmes. Prior to 1969, on the basis of PSLE results and aptitude tests, boy pupils were channelled by the MOE into one of the three types of schools namely, academic, technical or vocational, while girl pupils normally were channelled into academic or vocational schools. In 1969, to promote Technical Education in secondary schools, a common curriculum was introduced for pupils in the first and second years of secondary school, that is, Secondaries One and Two whereby, in addition to the normal school subjects which they were required to learn, these pupils had to take up Technical Drawing as well. All the boys and 50% of the

girls underwent workshop practice once a week outside school hours. Secondary Two pupils who wished to continue on with the Technical stream in Secondary Three, had to sit for an aptitude test.

In 1976, a committee headed by Rex A. Shelley was appointed by the government to review Technical Education in secondary schools. The Shelley Committee recommended that two subjects, namely Technical Drawing and Basic Electricity, should be removed from the curriculum and that secondary girl pupils should be given the option of choosing between Home Economics and Technical Workshop Practice (15). As regards the number of girl pupils who were to take up one or other of these courses, the Committee stuck to the original figure of 50% to be selected for the Technical course as introduced by the MOE in 1969, with the remaining 50% recommended to do Home Economics. As for boys, 100% of secondary boys were to attend Technical classes for at least two years of secondary school. The 50% quota imposed upon girls has prevented many of them from learning some basic skills which would enhance their future prospects in the labour market. The blatant discrimination is reflected in the large number of semi-skilled and unskilled female workers who make up the bulk of the female labour force which amounted to 36.3% of the total workforce in Singapore in 1984 (25). The educational attainments and the contributions that females make to the Singapore labour market are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

The emphasis on Technical Education at secondary level would not, however, be effective in transforming Singapore into a modern industrialised society without opportunities for Scientific and Technical Education at tertiary level being provided. The advance of Science and Technology in the last half century has surpassed all expectations. To compete effectively in the world market, industries have to upgrade their skills and methods of production on a regular basis in order to keep up with the speed of change and technological development and workers need to be highly qualified. Thus with considerable foresight and with support from the private sector, industries, chambers of commerce and educationists, the government established two technical colleges: the Singapore Polytechnic and the Nanyang Technological Institute to cater for the training of such personnel. A third college, the Ngee Ann Polytechnic was set up by an independent Chinese association.

The Singapore Polytechnic which was established in 1958 to provide professional training at tertiary level, was earmarked to be:

> ..an institute teaching many branches of technical and professional knowledge and primarily intended to provide part-time instruction for employed people who seek additional skill in more advanced knowledge of their occupation, and certification of their standards and attainments.
>
> (Yip (26), p.19)

In the 1983-84 academic year, the Polytechnic had a total enrolment of 10,910 students of whom 6,184 (4,863 were

males and 1,318 were females) were full-time and 4,729 (3,662 males and 1,067 females) part-time students (27). The 2,385 full and part-time female students represented 21.9% of the total student enrolment. Full and part-time courses offered at diploma level are Architectural Technician, Building, Chemical Process Technology, Civil Engineering Construction, Civil Engineering Design, Electrical Engineering, Electronics and Communication Engineering, Land Surveying, Marine Engineering, Maritime Studies (Shipping Commerce), Mechanical Engineering, Nautical Studies, Production Engineering and Quantity Surveying. A full-time certificate course in Maritime Radiocommunications is also available (27).

The Nanyang Technological Institute which was established in August 1981, was the former Chinese-language Nanyang University. Falling rolls had necessitated the the change in its status and role. It now conducts practice-oriented engineering courses at university level. Although it is an independent body with its own council, it is closely linked to the National University of Singapore (NUS) on academic matters (28). Its first batch of engineering students attended the NUS Engineering faculty for a common course, then 75% of these students were admitted to the Institute to complete the Bachelor of Engineering degree to be awarded by the NUS. There are three schools of engineering namely: the School of Civil and Structural Engineering, the School of Electrical and

Electronic Engineering and the School of Mechanical and Production Engineering. Its first batch of 582 second year students began their courses at the Institute in July 1982.

Ngee Ann Polytechnic as it is known today, was founded in 1963 by the Ngee Ann Kongsi, an association of the Teochew clan. Its primary objective then was to conduct courses in Languages, Domestic Science and Technical subjects at post-secondary level principally for Chinese medium secondary school leavers (11). In 1968, Ngee Ann College became known as Ngee Ann Technical College and established the departments of Mechanical Engineering, Industrial Electronics and Business Studies. At present it conducts 8 full-time diploma courses namely, Building Management, Business Studies, Computer Studies, Electrical Engineering, Electronic Engineering, Environmental Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Shipbuilding and Repair Technology.

As part of its continuing education programme, a number of courses are available to workers and students who can only attend classes in the evenings on a part-time basis. Certificate and diploma courses in Industrial Management, a diploma course in Marketing Management, a certificate course in Ship Draughtsmanship, an endorsement course in Naval Architecture and Ship Construction and other short courses such as Lift Maintenance, Energy Conservation in Airconditioning systems, Corrosion Control and Basic Programming are offered. A total of 4,927 students of whom

3,205 were males and 1722 or 35% were females, were recorded in its 1983-84 session (29).

The NUS which was established on 8 August 1980, through the merger of the University of Singapore and Nanyang University, had its roots in 1905, with the establishment of the King Edward VII College of Medicine. Raffles College which opened its doors to students in 1929, later merged with the College of Medicine to become the University of Singapore.

Today, the English stream NUS has 8 faculties; namely, Arts and Social Sciences, Law, Science, Medicine, Dentistry, Engineering, Architecture and Building and Accountancy and Business Administration as well as three schools: Postgraduate Medical Studies, Postgraduate Dental Studies and a Postgraduate School of Management. In the 1983-84 academic year, total undergraduate enrolment stood at 11,939 of which 5,343 were male and 6,596 or 55.2% of the total enrolment were female students (30). The highest concentration of female undergraduate students was in the Arts and Social sciences of which 2,061, or 75.7% of the total number, were females. The lowest concentration of female undergraduates was in the Engineering Faculty. Of the total number of 1,892 students (Engineering plus Chemical Engineering) enrolled in the faculty, 209 or 11.0% were females.

Besides the university and technical colleges, another means of access to tertiary education for those

intellectually able is the Institute of Education (IE) which was established on 1 April 1973. While full-time students have to pay fees for their course, part-time in-service students are paid a salary. Normally they are attached to one of the sessions of a school where they are required to report for duty like other members of the teaching staff five days a week. They attend classes at the IE two or three times a week before or after their teaching pending on the session to which they belong. As trainees, they do not carry the full teaching load but are given about 50 to 60 per cent of the normal teaching load of a qualified teacher. Thus, the salary they receive is also less than what a qualified teacher is paid.

As at June 1984, there were 18,809 qualified teachers in publicly maintained, government-aided mission and government-aided English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil primary and secondary schools and junior colleges in Singapore. 10,653 of this total were primary teachers while 8,156 were attached to secondary schools and junior colleges. Women teachers dominate the profession numerically, with 12,070 or 64.2% of them in all the three levels of education taken together (31).

3.6.2 The Goh Report and its implications on the Educational System in the 1980s

The achievement of the PAP Government in the field of education from 1959 on is undeniable impressive but no

administration can claim to have experienced a completely unruffled period of rule or absolute success in all its policies. The PAP Government encountered difficulties primarily with administration, both at ministry and school levels; with streaming; with Bilingual Education; with attrition rates and the morale of teachers. These problems were highlighted in the Report on the Ministry of Education 1978 or the Goh Report as it is also known, which was published in 1979.

It was in August 1978 that the Prime Minister Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, formally appointed his political assistant, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Dr. Goh Keng Swee, to look into the problems inherent in the MOE. No dateline was set for Dr. Goh to submit his report and he was also free to select whoever he wished to form his team of investigators. Thus the team that finally got down to work, was not a formal commission of inquiry.

The Goh Study Team conducted interviews, consulted important personnel from the MOE and other organisations and made references to other studies, reports and papers by the MOE. A total of 20 principals from both English and Chinese primary and secondary schools and 163 teachers from 12 English secondary and 16 English primary schools were interviewed by the study team.

The Goh Study Team concentrated much of its attention on the issues of the first and second languages that both primary and secondary pupils do in English and

Chinese schools. Both Malay and Tamil schools as discussed in Section 3.6.1 of the chapter, had experienced falling rolls since 1950. Besides being the minority groups, their pupils were generally not affected by either levels of languages. The Malay and Tamil languages that Malay and Tamil pupils studied either at the first or second language levels were their mother tongue.

In 1948, the number of pupils in Chinese schools almost doubled that of the pupils in the English stream as shown on Table 3.B below:

TABLE 3.B

ENROLMENTS OF CHINESE AND ENGLISH SCHOOLS

FOR THE YEARS 1948 TO 1953

Year	Chinese stream	English stream
1948	58,096	33,322
1949	68,434	37,655
1950	72,951	49,690
1951	75,975	55,292
1952	74,104	63,386
1953	79,272	71,118

(Source: Gwee, 1969)

However, 30 years later by 1978, a different picture emerged. In the figures of primary school registration from the years 1959 to 1978, as shown on Table 3.C, registration for the Chinese stream had dropped to 11.2% while that of the English stream had enjoyed increases progressively in the 20 year span.

TABLE 3.C

PRIMARY SCHOOL REGISTRATIONS FOR THE YEARS 1959 TO 1978

Year	English stream	Chinese stream	Chinese as % of Total (Includes Malay & Tamil streams)
1959	28,113	27,223	45.9%
1962	38,580	22,669	38.4%
1965	36,269	17,735	30.0%
1968	34,090	18,927	33.6%
1971	37,505	15,731	29.0%
1974	36,834	10,263	21.7%
1977	40,622	6,590	13.9%
1978	41,995	5,289	11.2%

(Source: Goh, 1979)

For the first six years from 1959 to 1965, a drop of 15.9% was evident in the registrations in Chinese stream schools. Except for 1968, when there was a small increase of 3.6%, from 1968 onwards to 1978, a total of 72.1% is recorded in the drop in registrations in Chinese stream schools. As pointed out earlier, this reflected the attitude of Chinese parents who began sending their children to English-stream schools primarily for economic reasons.

The great effort put in by the PAP Government to lure foreigners and multi-national corporations to invest in Singapore through ready-built, self-contained factories and attractive tax incentives in the late 1960s, paid dividends when foreign investors began to set up industries, offices, banks and insurance agencies in the country. The international language of commerce and communication is English and, owing to their lack of proficiency in the English Language, it was soon evident that pupils from

non-English medium schools were disadvantaged when compared with their counterparts in the English medium schools.

Although the teaching of a second language was initiated as far back as 1966 with Secondary One pupils and gradually incorporated in the primary school curriculum, it was soon found that particularly among the pupils of Chinese origin who formed the largest racial group in all schools (31), 85% of them did not speak either English or Mandarin at home (16). They used dialects instead. Except for a small percentage of pupils whose parents were English-educated, the majority had parents who had some Chinese education or were generally illiterate. Of the Chinese-educated parents, the majority were descendants of the early immigrants from the southern provinces of China where Mandarin was not the spoken language, though used universally as the written language, therefore, verbal communication between parents, grand-parents and children and even among siblings was in dialects. Since the pupils' homes and environment were non-supportive in the learning and speaking of English, pupils in general tended to speak in dialects.

Since 1966 when a second language was first introduced into the secondary curriculum, much time, effort and expenses had been expended on Bilingual Education. In 1966 and 1967, in non-English mudium schools, Mathematics and Science were taught in English while in 1969, Technical subjects were taught in English in Secondary One in the

Malay and Tamil medium schools. Simultaneously in the English medium schools, Civics was taught in the mother tongue (16).

Despite the efforts put in to upgrade the standard of English and the second language (Mandarin for Chinese pupils, Malay for Malay pupils and Tamil for Indian pupils in English schools and English for the pupils in Chinese, Malay and Tamil streams), successive results of PSLE and GCE 'O' Level Examinations since 1970 have revealed that more than 60% of the pupils who sat for these examinations failed in one or both languages and that only 19% at the end of their school course passed in both examinations (16).

The Goh Study Team also looked into another area which showed a pronounced defect in the education system. This was the system of automatic promotion which had been in practice before 1959 and continued on throughout the last two decades. The system had led to extremely high attrition rates in terms of failures and 'dropouts' from school. An average of 65% of the pupil intake at Primary One failed or dropped out at the primary and secondary stages. Statistics for the years 1971 to 1974 compiled by the Planning Section of the MOE in April and October 1975, revealed that 71% of the Primary One enrolment eventually passed the PSLE. Of this group, however, only 35% finally managed to obtain 3 or more GCE 'O' levels and only 14% got as far as pre-university classes. Of the 14% who sat for their 'A' level examination, slightly more than half, that is 9%, passed

their examinations and were eligible for entry to tertiary institutions (16). This figure compared unfavourably with performances in more developed countries, for example, the United Kingdom where 15% were successful in their 'A' level examinations, 20% in Taiwan, 27% in France and 38% in Japan (16).

The Goh Study Team also carried out a thorough investigation of the MOE's administrative system noting its many pitfalls which had been detrimental to the smooth running of the entire organisation, and drawing attention to the co-ordination and teamwork necessary among staffs at headquarters and in schools and to pupils' performance in general.

Heading the list of its shortcomings, as discovered by the team, was the absence of a capable, dynamic leadership to oversee the whole educational system. The team noted that the lack of clearly defined aims and objectives for the whole educational system and for the programmes and activities within the system hindered the development and progress of education (16). Departments like the Curriculum Development Section, the Examination Section and the Schools Branch, failed to establish a smooth system of communication and co-ordination among themselves so much so that secondary pupils had to suffer as a result of this failure. If there had been formal links among the three departments, secondary pupils would not be labouring under an overloaded curriculum which saw them being

introduced to new topics in Mathematics (16), attending 6 extra periods per week outside their normal school hours for Technical Education and participating in Extra-curricular activities (ECA), a compulsory requirement for all Singapore pupils from Primary Four onwards, which took up another 3 to 4 hours per week thus leaving them with little free time to relax or pursue their hobbies (32).

High ranking Ministry officials were also found to be unwilling to accept responsibility. They tended to depend on decisions taken at meetings (16), thus revealing their lack of initiative and drive to project their authority to carry out a scheme through swiftly.

Except for 30% of the sample group of 163 teachers from English primary and secondary schools interviewed by the Goh Study Team, who confidently expressed that their morale was high, the rest were frank in admitting their morale was low (16). Four major factors frequently cited by the participants which affected their morale were, firstly, the relatively low social status of teachers; secondly, too frequent changes in the education system; thirdly, the prevailing system of supervision of teachers and fourthly, poor promotion prospects within the system (16).

Singapore teachers generally were disappointed with the absence of political support given to education. On the many occasions when they were openly criticised by the public and attacked by the press when certain teaching schemes or methods went wrong, neither the MOE nor the

government came out to support them. There are altogether 5 teachers' unions in Singapore but none of them ever spoke out in defence of their members who became scapegoats for the many failings of MOE policy-makers as well as implementers of the frequent changes, since many new policies were found to be ineffective and impracticable shortly after implementation. It is no wonder then that in the last two decades, successive batches of teachers continued to feel demoralised working under such conditions.

3.6.3 Recommendations of the Goh Study Team

The 1979 Goh Report was to form the basis of the educational system in Singapore in the 1980s. Heading the list of its recommendations was the suggestion of a new approach to the teaching of the first and second languages in all primary and secondary schools. Under the New Education System (NES) to be implemented in 1980 in the primary schools, the first three years of primary education would emphasise the learning of languages instead of the acquisition of factual knowledge (16). It was pointed out by the study team that it was essential that the young pupils build up a firm foundation in languages which would later assist them in the learning of Mathematics, Science and the other subjects in the curriculum. Based on their performance in the first three years, these primary pupils, at the end of their third year, would be streamed into the normal bilingual course, the extended bilingual course or the monolingual course (31). Streaming was to be carried

out by individual schools based on continual and semestral assessments (See Figures 3.1 and 3.2).

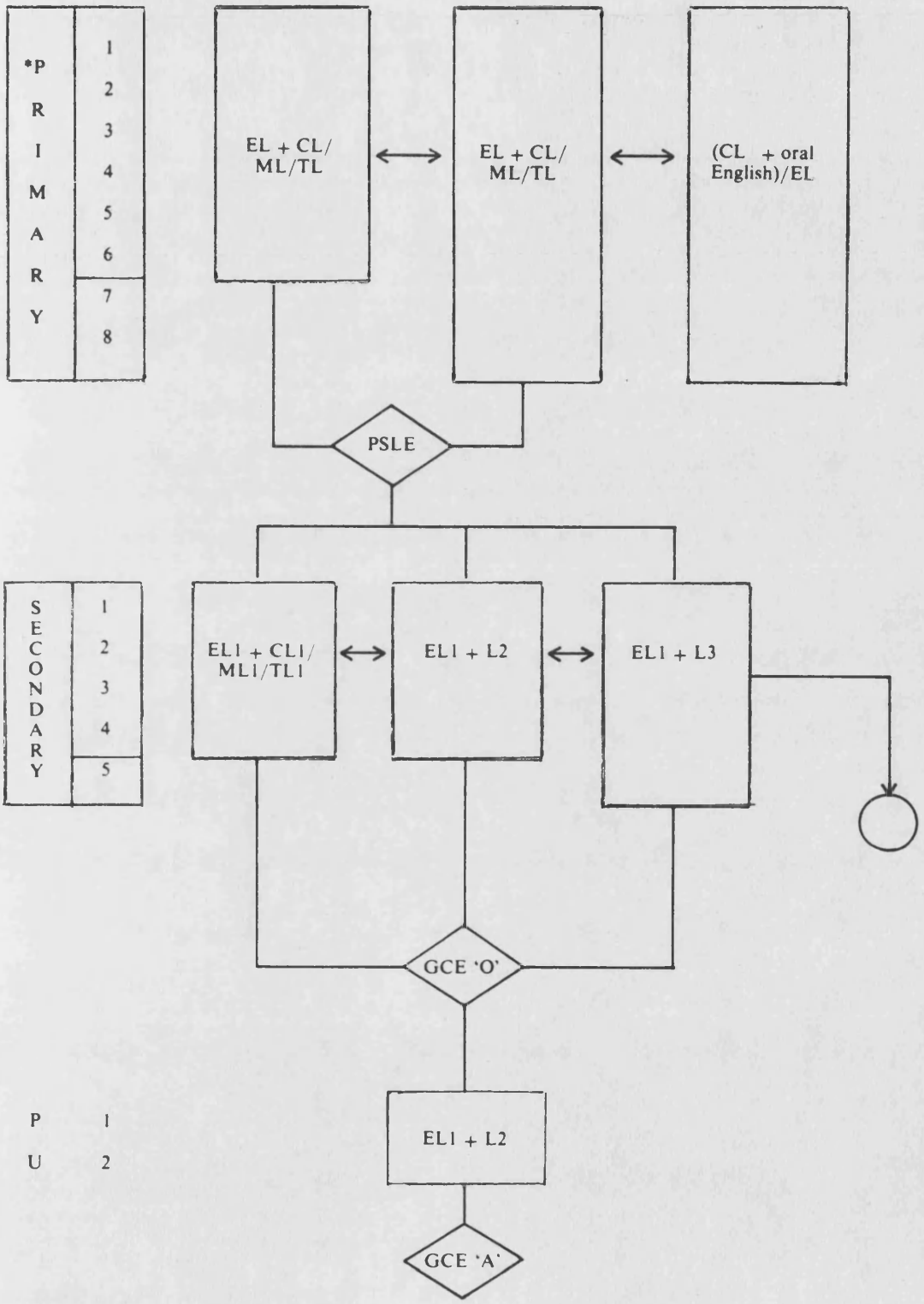
Pupils selected for the normal bilingual course in their fourth year, that is, Primary Four, were expected to complete their primary education in the standard 6 years. In addition to the other subjects in the primary curriculum, they would have to study two languages. Pupils channelled to the extended course would follow the same but modified syllabuses as those in the normal bilingual course and they would also attempt two languages, but they would complete their primary education in 8 instead of 6 years. At the end of their sixth and eighth years respectively, both groups of pupils would sit for the PSLE in order to gain entry to secondary schools.

The final group of slow learners who were found to be incapable of mastering two languages, would concentrate on one language for the next five years. At the end of their fifth year, they would be required to sit for an examination and, if successful, be awarded a certificate. Although secondary education is not available to them, they could, however, seek admission to the vocational schools to learn a skill.

PSLE, which was first introduced in 1960, is the passport to secondary education. Prior to 1980, successful pupils were channelled to academic, vocational or technical streams which all lasted four years. But the NES of 1980

FIGURE 3.1

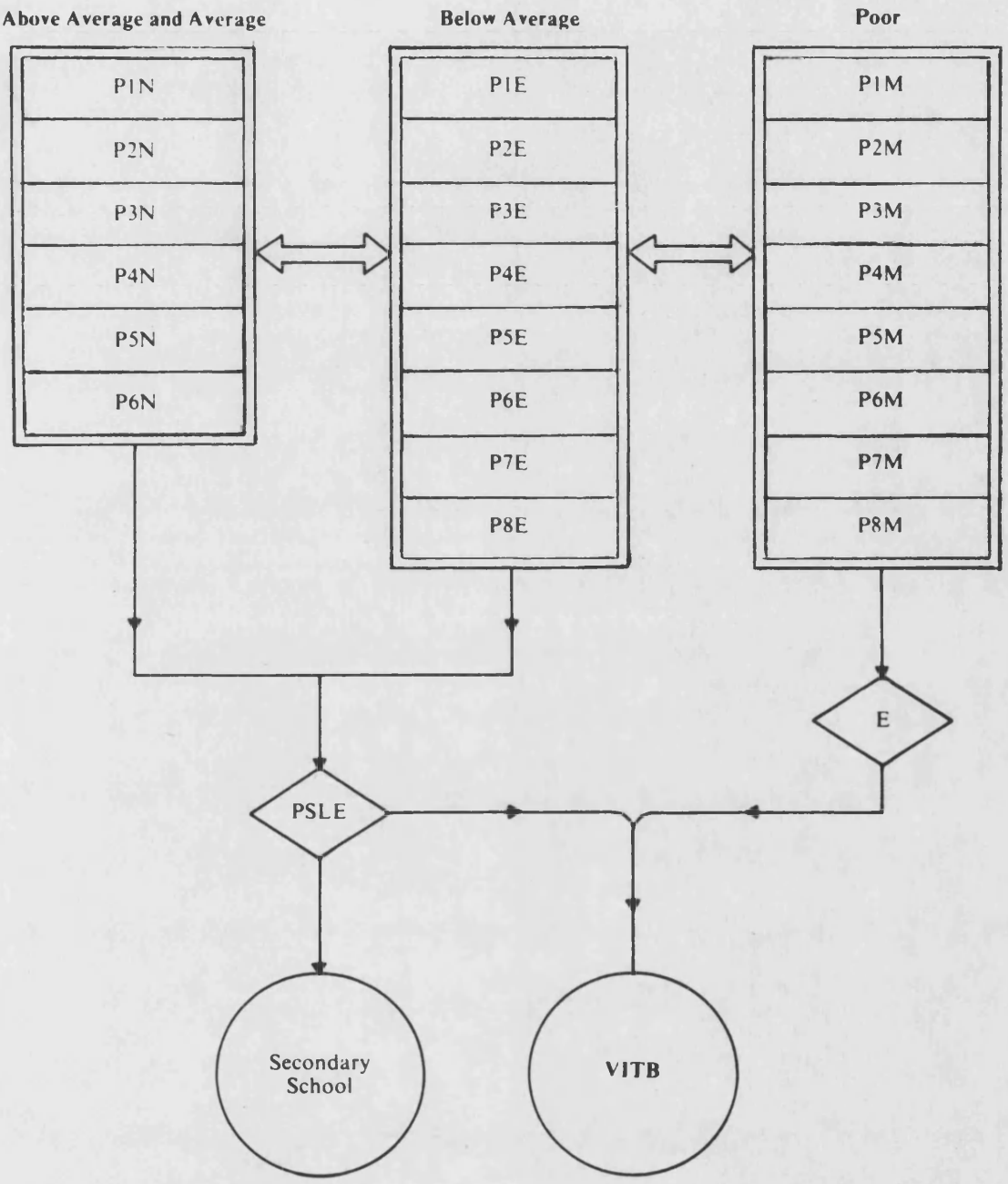
SUMMARY OF THE SUGGESTED EDUCATION SYSTEM - THE GOH REPORT



(Source: Goh Report,1979)

FIGURE 3.2

1. **Primary School***



Key

EL + CL/ ML/TL

(CL + oral English) or (EL)

Lateral (inter-stream) movement

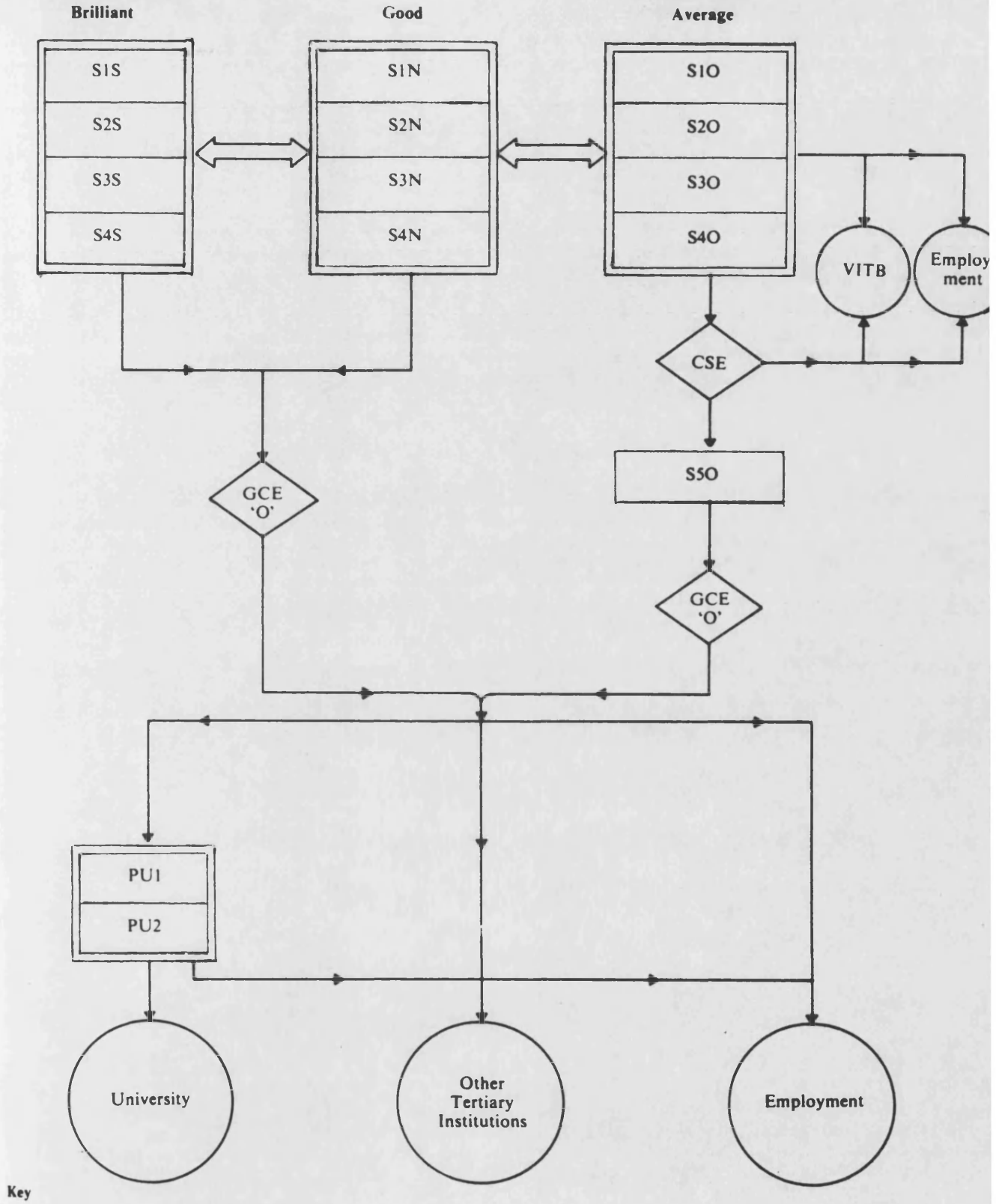
Examination

* All primary pupils will be in a common stream in the initial years.

(Source: Goh Report, 1979)

2. Secondary School

FIGURE 3.3



(Source: Goh Report, 1979)

did away with the uniform period of secondary education. Based on their performance in the PSLE, pupils would be streamed into the secondary special, secondary express and secondary normal courses by the MOE. Since the PSLE is a public examination the MOE has by right the powers to stream children according to their results.

Pupils channelled to the first two types of courses, that is, secondary special and secondary express would attempt the GCE 'O' Level Examinations at the end of their fourth year while those streamed to the secondary normal course would follow a modified curriculum that would prepare them to sit for the Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) Examinations at the end of their fourth year. They would, however, be allowed to attempt the GCE 'O' Level Examinations after an extra year of study should they perform well in the CSE Examinations. Where the pupils in the secondary special course are expected to do both English and their mother tongue in the first language level, the pupils in the other two courses would do English at the first level and their mother tongue at the second language level (16). (See Figures 3.1 and 3.3)

This new emphasis on language learning beginning from the primary stage and intensified through the secondary stage which began in January 1981, one year after it was started in the primary schools, is aimed at an all round improved performance by pupils in both the first and second languages. To the concerned educationists, the streaming of

pupils at such a tender age, that is, nine years, in their primary school, seems a very unfair and unrealistic system and the author agrees with these educationists. The initiators of this new system of language learning have failed to take into consideration the mental development of different pupils. Not every nine year old child thinks and behaves in the same way as generally expected of them nor do they possess the same Intelligence Quotient (IQ). It has been proved time and again through IQ tests, retests and studies by Honzik et al as early as 1948 (33), Bradway and Robinson, 1961 (34), Harnqvist, 1968 (35), Rees and Palmer, 1970 (36) and Anastasi, 1982 (37), that sharp rises and drops in IQ take place as children grow and develop. Some children are late developers and with this system which eliminates those who fail to make the grade at the end of their third year in primary school, they may end up being confined either to the monolingual group, unable to sit for the PSLE, or proceed to the extended bilingual course, thus being denied the opportunity to have a secondary education. For those channelled to the extended bilingual course, it means having to spend 2 extra years before they can attempt the PSLE.

The emphasis on monitoring the development and progress of pupils from the first year of their school life, then selecting the cream and placing them apart from the other pupils, as recommended by the Goh Report, leads to the creation of an elite group of pupils. In the last four years, extensive studies of the British, Israeli, Russian

and American educational systems by Singapore educationists from the MOE headquarters, have led the MOE to decide to accord special treatment to gifted children (31). As early as the age of nine, these gifted children are to be identified through a common test based on 50 questions on Mathematics and 50 on the first language. At the age of twelve, they would sit for 3 intelligence tests that will further gauge their abilities (38).

A special gifted children's unit has been set up at the MOE headquarters and the selected pupils will be instructed by a team of hand-picked teachers and be taught separately in smaller classes of 25 pupils per class. The segregation of the gifted children from the average and below average pupils breeds elitism, but the MOE's defence as reported in an article on Education in Singapore is that:

> This is not elitism based on privilege and inherited wealth which is wrong; but on merit, which is fair. An equitable education system, gives each child an appropriate education, not necessarily an equal one.
> (Times Educational Supplement (38), p.18)

These selected pupils are expected to form the future core of a highly-educated local workforce able to fit into the world of advanced technology. This new thrust of the 1980's therefore, reflects the forward-looking policy of the PAP Government. Singapore has no mineral wealth to boast of nor stretches of rich agricultural land - she has to import practically all her foodstuffs. Her greatest asset, therefore, lies in her people, as the Prime Minister,

Mr. Lee has often stressed. The island has already established itself as the leading centre of industrialisation in South-East Asia. To move into the world of advanced technology and consolidate its pivotal position as the "brain industry" centre of its immediate region (38), its educational system must be so geared as to identify the most promising talents among its large pupil population from the primary stages.

The administrative system which came under fire by the Goh Study Team, was to be revamped. The Report recommended changes, in particular to the hierarchical set-up of the administrative personnel at headquarters and the clear-cut divisions of authority among these administrators to ensure effective management of the entire organisation, both at headquarters down to grass-roots levels.

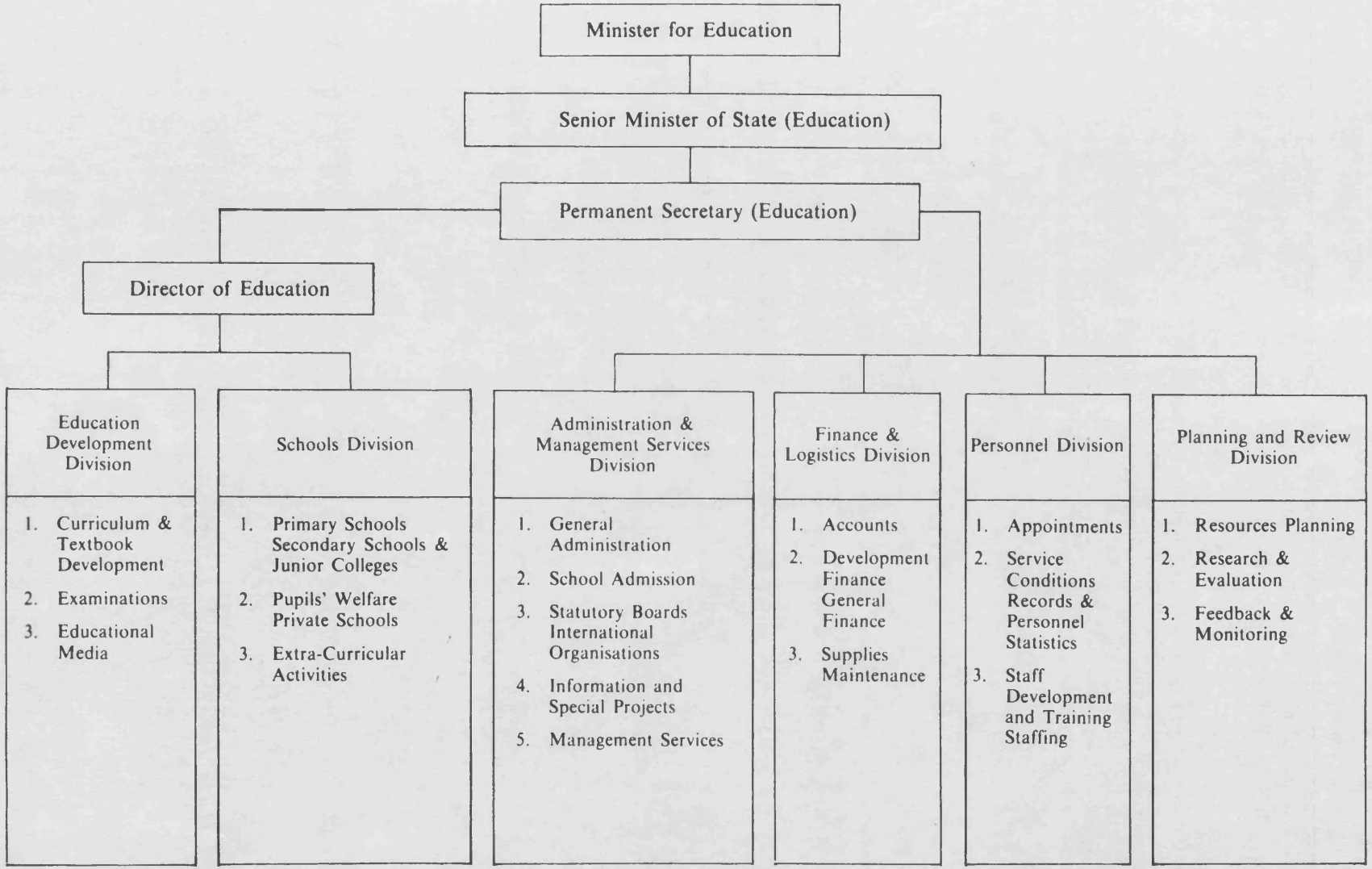
Prior to January 1979, the MOE was headed by a Senior Minister of State for Education who was assisted by the Permanent Secretary and Director of Education both of whom were equal in status. Often there was over-lapping of management of the departments that came under their supevision. From January 1979, it was recommended that the MOE was to be made up of 6 divisions, each to be headed by a Director. Two of the divisions, namely Education Development Division and Schools Division, are to answer directly to the Director of Education while the other four, that is, Administration and Management Services Division,

Finance and Logistics Division, Personnel Division and Planning and Review Division are to be under the purview of the Permanent Secretary. While this new set-up would ensure a smooth running of the organisation, the Director of Education's status has been down-graded. He, or she, is expected to answer to the Permanent Secretary for the divisions that come under his control. Figure 3.4 shows the organisation of MOE as from January 1979.

It has been the Schools Division which directly supervised the management of all schools in the colony even prior to 1979. For effective control and co-ordination, the island is to be divided into four areas with a Deputy Director in charge of each area and the four in turn are to answer to the Director of the Division. Figure 3.5 shows that in each area, there are approximately 30 secondary and 86 primary schools. Three Assistant Directors are to help the Deputy Director to supervise the 30 secondary schools while 6 Assistant Directors are to assist in looking after the primary schools.

In England, all schools and all colleges of higher and further education maintained by local education authorities or receiving grants from public funds, are open to inspection (39). HM Inspectors besides offering advice to local education authorities, schools and colleges also discuss day-to-day problems with them (39). In Singapore, a team of Inspectors is to be attached to each of the 4 areas. Their primary duty is to supervise schools and

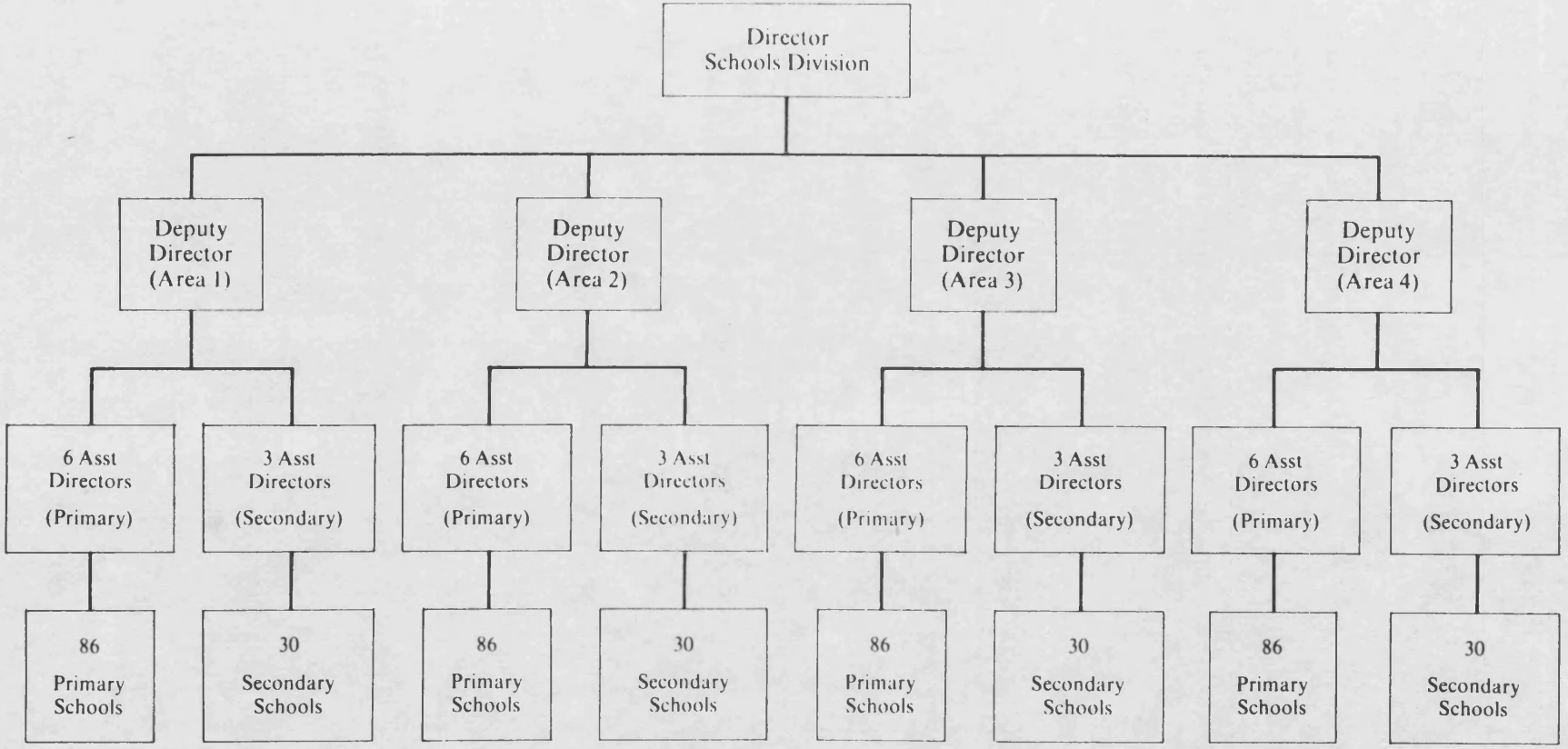
FIGURE 3.4 **ORGANISATION CHART OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION HQ (JANUARY 1979)**



(Source: Goh Report, 1979)

FIGURE 3.5

FIGURE 3 — PROPOSED ORGANIZATION OF SCHOOLS BRANCH



(Source: Goh Report, 1979)

advise Principals and teachers on professional matters. Prior to 1980, all teachers had to be observed in classroom teaching by MOE Inspectors before they could be confirmed in their posts or allowed to cross certain salary bars. The Goh Study Team found that many teachers felt this aspect of their duty to be distasteful and therefore it recommended that Inspectors now play the role primarily of advisors. They are to set out in teams of 4 or 5 for a week or 10 days at a stretch observing, checking and monitoring schools and the progress of the pupils. Principals, Vice-Principals and Heads of Subject departments of all schools are to be given the task of appraising all the other teachers who make up the members of their staff. This new approach to staff appraisal together with a review of the salary structure and better promotion prospects for all categories of teaching staff, were recommended by the team to help boost the morale of Singapore teachers.

3.7 Conclusion: Main factors affecting female education

Throughout its 140 years of administration of Singapore, British education policies for the colony had been modelled along the same lines as those in the United Kingdom. It was for boys mainly that successive British Governments expended their energies and funds in the area of education. Up to the end of the last century in the United Kingdom, the curriculum was geared to prepare boys for their entry into the labour market. In Singapore, the same system prevails even today, thus reinforcing the disadvantaged

position that generations of girls had experienced since the foundation of the colony. Only minimal efforts were put in by the various missionary bodies and even by the major ethnic groups to educate girls in the early years of the development of Singapore. These efforts were also limited by the views held by evangelical and Catholic Christians about the proper roles of women. This led to an emphasis in those schools that were set up for girls in the latter half of the 19th century, on Needlework, Cookery and the 3Rs, which hampered their chances of admission and selection to middle level management and instead confined them to low pay, unskilled jobs with slim opportunities of upward mobility, in the labour market.

A boost to female education was seen from 1960 onwards when the PAP Government's policy of equal educational opportunities for every Singaporean regardless of race, creed and sex, was put into operation. But as with its predecessor, the PAP Government's educational policies also favoured boys generally as revealed in the 1969 policy on Technical Education whereby only 50% of Secondaries One and Two girl pupils were to be allowed to attempt technical courses while 100% of the same cohorts of boys were allowed to do the courses for at least two years. By channelling the other 50% of secondary girls to do Home Economics, the government not only denies them the chance to compete equally with boys upon entry into the labour market since the skills taught them are less marketable, but reinforces

the cultural and societal concepts of female inferiority and their confinement to the kitchen and to motherhood. Courses such as Dressmaking, Cookery and Hairdressing conducted by vocational institutes for example, for early girl school leavers, represent an extension of the feminine chores carried out at home.

Unless equal numbers of boys and girls are to be given the chance to develop their skills and potentials to the maximum, the imbalance which prevails at present in many sectors of the professions and in industry and commerce with males dominating the higher stratas of management, will continue to persist. For too long now, females from the three main racial groups, the Chinese, the Malays and the Indians, have suffered subordination and subjection to the norms and tenets both held by the missionaries and practised by their respective ethnic groups which confined them to the home and kitchen and made them an insignificant presence in the labour market. The following chapter will look into the historical background of each of these groups of Singapore women who first ventured out with their spouses to start a new life in the colony in the early 19th century, and their position and role in the home and in society.

CHAPTER 4

THE POSITION AND ROLE OF SINGAPORE WOMEN FROM 1819 TO 1958

4.1 Introduction

As on 22 June 1984, the population of the cosmopolitan city state of Singapore stood at 2.53 million, made up of 1,268,600 males and 1,260,500 females (1). Females who constitute 49.8% of the population thus represent a powerful force to reckon with. A century and a half ago, it was a different picture. The first immigrants who braved their way to the newly established colony in the early 19th century, came alone without their spouses or families. There were, as Purcell (2) points out, 13 women to 100 males and this disproportionate sex ratio encouraged traffickers in the middle of the 19th century to bring in women from China who were mostly prostitutes (13). The Chinese male immigrant in particular, did not start remitting money to his family in China to send over his wife and family until the latter half of the last century. The Singapore Aliens Ordinance of 1933 which imposed quotas on the entry of males while relaxing its quota on females, was instrumental in boosting the percentage of females in the population. The Pacific War took its toll of tens of thousands of males who died from torture and mass executions by the Japanese. This further contributed to the increase in female population in the 1940s and 1950s. The immigration trend in the 19th and early 20th centuries and the outbreak of the Second World War therefore had certain

implications on the position, role and education of Singapore women yesterday and today.

Although the Chinese dominate the country numerically, the success of the colony has resulted also from the contributions made by all the other ethnic groups, predominant among them being the Malays and Indians. This chapter attempts to bring out the ethnic differences between Singapore women of these three groups, the social stratification that prevails in each racial group which in turn underlies the fact of discrimination and the concept of women, as Wong (3) stresses, as a minority group. To quote Wirth (4):

> A minority group is any group of people who because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from the others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination.
>
> (Wirth (4), p.245)

Singapore women were and still are seen in society as a minority group. All the three major ethnic groups have thrived on family systems which were predominantly patrilineal, patrilocal and patriarchal, supported by cultural and religious beliefs which place women in positions of inferiority to men.

Roles and status, as Epstein (5) points out, are situation-specific, yet defined in such a way that they retain meaning in different contexts. A role provides a

comprehensive pattern for behaviour and attitudes; it constitutes a strategy for coping with a recurrent situation; it is socially identified, more or less clearly, as an entity and it supplies a major basis for identifying and placing persons in society (6). Status connotes evaluation, hence honour, esteem, respect and prestige are its synonyms. In this thesis, the word 'position' is used synonymously for 'status'. Status in this sense is a gratification and its loss, a deprivation (7). Accordingly, a woman's role refers to the way she is expected to behave in certain situations and her status or position indicates the esteem in which she is held by the different individuals and groups who come into contact with her.

Culturally, each of the three major ethnic groups that make up the 98% of the total cosmopolitan population of Singapore today (8) uphold traditional teachings and practices that highlight the significant roles that the male sex is encouraged to play: as the undisputed heads of extended or nuclear families; as the sole breadwinners; as the distributors of the means for sustenance in extended families and as the political and religious leaders in the public spheres.

A vivid picture of the life of Chinese girls and women in general at the turn of the century, is given by Dr. Lee Choo Neo, Singapore's first woman doctor. Except for her childhood years where she was free to roam and mix freely with her siblings and even boys in her neighbourhood,

the age of puberty signalled the beginning of a period of segregation, loneliness, monotony and above all, preparation for the ultimate goal in a girl's life, that is, marriage (See Section 4.2.2). While marriage released a girl from the many restrictions imposed upon all members of her sex from the age of adolescence onwards within her own household, these same restrictions followed her to the household of her spouse. Added to the limitations of freedom of movement, of decision-making and of socialisation, were expectations of her productive ability needed to perpetuate her husband's family name by bearing sons. The private domain of her husband's home and the kitchen occupied her time for the rest of her life. She was deemed incapable of supporting her family even in times of need and to seek gainful employment was not only seen as "indecent and disgraceful" but an attempt to "expose oneself to public gaze" (Lee (9), pp.498-500).

Such had been the cultural attitudes not only of the Chinese but also of the Malays and Indians towards their women. The education of women, for example, was viewed with suspicion and seen as a waste of funds. An educated woman who could read and write, would pose a threat to a harmonious marriage since she would be able to challenge her husband's authority. Therefore, for decades, as discussed in Chapter 3, early attempts at establishing schools in 19th century Singapore, were geared to the education of boys. English Education for girls began only in the 1840s while Chinese, Malay and Tamil Education did

not make their mark until after the turn of the 20th century. A discussion of the education of girls takes place in Section 4.5.

External influences in particular, were instrumental in bringing about a change in the cultural attitudes of the Chinese and Indians towards their women in the areas of education and the breaking down of some of the traditional barriers that have confronted the women of these two racial groups for generations. The overthrow of the Manchus and the re-establishment of a Chinese Nationalist Government in mainland China in 1911, brought with it new concepts to the roles and status of women in Chinese society. So did the birth of the Indian Independent Government in 1947 which accorded equal rights to all women in marriage, in education and in free participation in employment and politics. The cumulative result of these influences was the granting of equal educational and employment opportunities to Singapore women from the 1950s onwards and the raising of their status by legislation, as documented in Chapter 5. However, Singapore women are seen as objects of change, coping rather than initiating, bystanders rather than participants (10), in the period of transition.

4.2 The position and role of Chinese women from 1819 to 1958

4.2.1 The position and role of Chinese women in the traditional family system

Early Chinese women in Singapore were either natives of mainland China whose husbands or fathers had left their villages to seek their fortunes abroad and having found their pots of gold, brought them over to set up their homes in Singapore, or the descendants of mixed marriages, that is, mainly between Chinese men and local Malay women. The latter group became known as Straits-born Chinese or 'Peranakan'. Except for the first ancestress being a full-blooded Malay, subsequent generations continued to preserve the Chinese blood as the daughters were not allowed to marry the native Malay men while the sons were sent off to China for their education (11), where ultimately, they were being matched with Chinese girls from the mainland. As early as the 15th century, adventurous Chinese traders who followed the routes taken by the Chinese eunuch and statesman of the Ming Court, Admiral Cheng Ho who visited Malacca in 1408 and 1412, soon found it convenient to marry the native women in the towns where they had set up their business houses (12). These women helped to keep the business going while the men returned to China for fresh supplies of goods when the monsoon changed.

The China wife was left to toil on the family plot, planting, hoeing and harvesting while at the same time

attending to household chores and bringing up children. The Straits girl was confined to the house, the kitchen and to the service of her husband and master. These reflect the low status of the female sex who for generations had lived through "forced seclusion, imposed ignorance, lack of educational opportunities, discrimination against working women and repressive marriage customs" (Yang (13), p.246). All these disabilities have culminated in "women's economic dependence in traditional society" (Yang (13), p.246). Economic dependence thus implies inferior status (14).

Yet there is evidence that, however longstanding, this dependence was not always a characteristic of Chinese women. For example, Lang (15) tells us that in the early days of the Chinese civilisation, women enjoyed relatively high status when they were food gatherers and potters in the early stages of agriculture and pottery making before the plough and the potter's wheel were invented. Shih (16) notes that the burial patterns during the Neolithic Ch'ing-lian-kiang culture which flourished in the lower Yangtze in places like Kiangsu, Anhwei and Chekiang, appear to suggest that society then was organised in clans, that there was no sexual division of labour and was probably matriarchal. The famous Biographies of Women which describes the lives of empresses down to the ordinary peasant women from the beginning of the Chinese civilisation to the first century B.C. of the late Han period reveals, as O'Hara (17) points out, that women had greater freedom of movement and did more field work than the women of later

periods.

Historically, the position and status of women in the home and in society began to deteriorate beginning from the period of the Chou Dynasty, 1027 to 256 B.C. The primary force which fostered this gradual decline of the status of noble women, was the teaching of Confucius. Many of the earlier rights of women were lost through the impact of Confucianism which found favour with the nobility who faithfully carried out his ideals to the letter, although the peasant women were not affected for generations. The great Chinese philosopher Confucius who lived from 551 to 479 B.C., taught a code of right conduct which permeates all aspects of an individual's association and relationship with his immediate family, his kith and kin, his society, his country and his king.

The family is the central focus of one's upbringing, the socialisation with the other members related by blood, marriage or adoption and the training ground for the future filial son and successful citizen or the obedient, agreeable daughter-in-law. The ideal Chinese family is the extended family with a large membership made up of several generations all living, working and sharing under one roof. This was commonly practised among the Confucian-educated gentry classes and nobles, in which the paterfamilias lived with his married sons and their families together with his other unmarried sons and their daughters. To run such large family arrangements harmoniously required

a supreme head of the family who was not only a man of authority who could command respect all round, but also one who was extremely rich. Thus, only the very wealthy in ancient and modern China were able to maintain such families with a dozen or more mouths to feed. The more common types of families then were the stem family in which one or both parents lived with the family of one of the sons (usually the eldest), together with the other unmarried children; or the joint fraternal family in which the eldest brother presided over his younger married and unmarried brothers, with his and their wives and their children; or lastly, the more commonly known nuclear family of today consisting of the married couple and their own children which make up the household (18). This fourth mode of family was prevalent among tenants, petty merchants, artisans and peasants.

To help make the family a harmonious social unit, each member is expected to know his place in relation to the others (19). Thus, one of the basic teachings of the great sage Confucius, is the acknowledgement of the father as the head of the family and as the head, he is entitled to the greatest measure of respect (19). With several generations living under one roof, the oldest male member from the highest generation rules supreme (18). Both Wong (18) and Warshaw (19) tell us that the oldest male member has the privilege of distributing the productive tasks to the individual members within the family, takes charge of the family purse and tries to establish an atmosphere of peace

and goodwill among the many children and grandchildren who come under his patronage.

Wong (18) asserts that these two principles of internal organisation, namely the generational hierarchy and the sex hierarchy, characterise the traditional Chinese family. The first principle leads to a very strong father-son relationship, the most significant relationship within the family; thus, following next in the hierarchy of authority within the family, was the eldest son. The cultural emphasis on continuity of the family line and the Confucian belief in ancestor worship, has produced what Wong (18) notes, as a prominent father-son identification, so that one always lives under the authority of one's father and under the shadow, as Hsu (20) points out, of one's ancestors.

The second principle, therefore, has led to the extremely subordinate status of the Chinese women as centuries passed by. Within the extended family propounded by Confucius, the subjugation of women was born. The stress on male lineage so necessary to the continuation of the family surname and the cult of ancestor worship, automatically culminated in women's position being lowered (18). Her main duties now are confined to that of reproduction and attending to household chores. The Three Obediences which form the code of feminine ethics clearly state that a woman is to obey her father at home, her husband after marriage and her eldest son after the death of

her husband. Thus throughout their lives, women were subjected to men, be it father, husband or son.

So pronounced was sex discrimination among the poor that in cases of economic hardship, it was not unusual for fathers to sell their daughters off to become servants in rich homes and in extreme cases, female infanticide has been known to have been practised. To the poor farmer toiling in the fields, a son was an asset. Not only would the father have someone strong to help him to furrow, plant and harvest his crops, he would eventually gain a daughter-in law. Besides attending to the household chores, the daughter-in-law would provide him with grandchildren, preferably male offspring who would perpetuate the family lineage. Thus, from an early age, girls are constantly reminded of their ultimate fate, that is, to be married off and become their future husbands' possessions. Once married, girls have no more claims to their own families for all formal ties of relationship, inheritance and even contact in extreme cases are severed. Even in homes which accepted them as daughters, they were confined to the women's quarters of the house, not to be seen or heard in public gatherings. Their status was further diminished by the denial of educational and economic opportunities. Though peasant women laboured beside their menfolk in the field during peak harvest seasons, agricultural work was not their major occupation (18). Their main roles, Wong (18) claims, were still in the homestead. Middle and upper class women seldom did any productive work and, therefore, they were

economically dependent on their families. The practice of footbinding which began in the 10th century among the rich families and was gradually adopted by middle and peasant women, symbolises the extreme subjugation of women (18).

The segregation, discrimination and subordination which a girl experienced from the day she was born, were further reinforced after her marriage. Her primary duty and obligation as wife now was to produce sons, the more the better, for the family line. Due respect must be accorded to her husband's parents and this involved not only cooking and serving them at meal times but attending to all their whims and fancies in less well-off families without maids. Besides being expected to be obedient to her mother-in-law, she was also trained never to voice her resentment but to carry out all chores however menial or distasteful they might be. Wong (3) stresses that a woman had no say in the family except when she became a mother-in-law herself or became a widow. Except for the small dowry which her parents had given her on her wedding day and gifts showered upon her by relatives and in-laws, she could not hold or inherit any property. The birth of male heirs and in later years the assumption of the role of mother-in-law herself, improved her position within the family but she was still at that juncture, subjected to her own grown-up sons (18).

Prostitution and concubinage which had their roots long before footbinding became fashionable among the elite class a thousand years ago, were openly practised and

accepted by the people as part of their social life. The keeping of one or several concubines or secondary wives was the prerogative of the rich and influential. Early Chinese emperors who started the trend were known to have dozens of concubines in their courts, all housed in a special wing, closed to all other members of the imperial household and strongly guarded by eunuchs. However intelligent or beautiful they might be, concubines were never accorded the same status as the first wife. Being lower in position, they were obliged to show respect to the official wife and to serve and obey her while all shared the same roof. The children they produced, did not call them 'mothers' but owed their filial duty to the official wife.

The inferior status of women was not just a myth or practice confined to a section of the Chinese populace. It permeated the entire country and was institutionalised through legal channels, namely the Imperial Penal Code, under which the husband could divorce his wife unilaterally, as Wong (3) points out, on seven grounds, namely: failure to produce a son; disobedience to his parents (her in-laws); misconduct; jealousy; stealing; suffering from a maglignant disease and loquacity. To be divorced by her husband was a stigma not only to herself but also to her own kith and kin. A divorced woman was like an infectious disease, despised by her own folks and shunned by neighbours. Few divorced women among the gentry and upper classes ever remarried. Since the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644

A.D.) which initiated the practice of honouring chaste widows, the doctrine of chaste widowhood has since been fervently adhered to by widows of the upper classes. However, remarriage was resorted to by the very poor who had no other feasible means of livelihood. Generally peasants and other women belonging to the lower social classes who were able to fend for themselves through menial work as maids, shop assistants, cooks, for example, enjoyed more freedom and economic independence than their counterparts who belonged to the higher strata of society. The daughters and wives of the gentry class or noble families could not venture beyond the front doors of their households without being accompanied by maids, in palanquins and after obtaining prior permission from the head of the house.

Although men have the greater privilege in the eyes of the law as regards the dissolution of their marriage, there were, however, three grounds which prevented them from making such a move at random and which protected the average wife from being cast aside at the mere caprice of her husband. The first of these laws stated that if she had faithfully carried out the required three-year mourning of either of her husband's parents, he has no right to divorce her. Secondly, neither could he divorce her after he has become rich, when at the time of marriage, the family was poor. The third criterion touches on the humanitarian side of the issue, that is, she cannot be divorced if she has no home to return to, especially in the case of women who come from single-child families with parents already

deceased or from homes whose living siblings are too poor to support another mouth. With no inheritance, little or no education, and no working experience except for the peasant woman, a divorce could mean sending her to her death.

While romantic love is the fashion today in the Western world and the cult is fast becoming a trend with Eastern societies, with men and women free to select their own partners without prior sanction from their parents, young men and women in traditional Chinese families were denied such a privilege and right. They had no say whatsoever in the choice of their life partners. When they were of marriageable age, usually in their late teens, match-makers were hired by parents to scout for eligible spouses for their children. Two factors played important roles in the final acceptance or rejection of such matches. They were firstly, the socio-economic background of the families involved and secondly, the matching of the horoscopes of the potential bride and groom. The high bride price usually demanded of all classes had left many very poor peasants leading celibate lives. A practical solution to this problem among the poor was the practice of taking in foster child brides into the family (18). The practice prevailed in provinces to the south and south-eastern regions of China and these child brides, bought while very young and cheaply, were often a few years older than their intended husbands. Advocates of this custom point to the practicability of having older daughters-in-law since their

labour could be utilised as early as possible (18).

When Confucius first expounded his theories, they were frowned upon by the wealthy, his fellow officers of the court and even the man in the street. Undaunted by opposition and non-conformists, he continued teaching and he travelled extensively to drive home his ideology to all who cared to lend an ear. Soon he had a number of well-read, respectable students who helped to spread his words far and wide. By the time of his death in 479 B.C., he had a large following. Soon generation after generation of Chinese adopted his rules of right conduct as the basis of family and social relationships. Confucius' five cardinal social relationships namely, ruler-ruled, father-son, brother-brother, husband-wife and friend-friend, soon found support among the educated classes and were brought to the attention of the common people and peasants through folk-religion and folk-lore.

A set of economic, social-cultural and political factors contributed to the success of the traditional family system as preached by Confucius. China was basically an agricultural country and the family farm was the centre of its economic activity. All members of the family lived under the same roof. Together they ploughed, planted and cultivated the crops essential for their subsistence. Being such a large country, it was impossible for successive governments to administer effectively central control over every village in the remote areas of the empire thus the

village communities in turn became important units in themselves. Divorced from central control, they enjoyed much autonomy, with the clans overseeing the peace and law and order of their village and the adherence of their respective members and their families to the Confucian principles that had become part of their way of life.

The conquests of China first by the Mongols (1279 to 1368 A.D.) and later the Manchus (1644 to 1911 A.D.), failed to upset the traditional Chinese family or to divert the Chinese from their Confucian ideology. Conversely, family ties became stronger and the relationships among friends in many instances, for example, of those who joined secret societies and had sworn to drive out all foreign invaders from their native land, became more pronounced. It was not uncommon to sacrifice one's life, family and possessions to support and protect one's sworn 'brother' or 'sister' and his or her family, in the struggle for freedom from foreign domination.

4.2.2 Chinese women in the 19th and 20th century Singapore

The early batches of immigrants, both males and females, who came to settle in Singapore in the early 19th century were deeply imbued with the socio-cultural-religious tenets of Confucianism. The subjugation of women remained visibly active as they were entirely confined to the household: washing, cooking, ironing, sweeping in the case of the poor, struggling class or the supervision of these activities among the merchant class but above all,

regardless of social status, they were primarily concerned with producing and rearing children.

A woman's inability to give birth to sons made it possible for her husband to keep mistresses or secondary wives. Both Braddell (21) and Freedman (22) note that unlike traditional China where the principal wife or the concubine(s) were not entitled to inherit property, (although in the case of the principal wife she was entitled to a legal claim to maintenance upon the death of the husband), in Malaya and Singapore, Colonial Law gave both principal and secondary wives equal rights to inherit the husband's property. Unlike China, where the concubines were normally girls from poor families brought home to serve the principal wife, the secondary wife in Singapore a century ago lived apart in different households and in many instances were girls from the same or even better social class than her husband. These local girls in the latter 19th and early 20th centuries were even able to speak the lingua franca of the colony, that is, English, and a number had even experienced working life before marriage while some continued to work after marriage. This indicates that the practice of having secondary wives in this region was not confined solely to the rich as in traditional China but was done much further down the socio-economic scale (3).

Sixty-five years ago in 1919, a significant event took place which blazed the trail for women who sought academic achievement. It was the graduation of the first

Singapore woman from the local Medical School. While a first year medical student, Miss (Dr.) Lee Choo Neo wrote an article entitled, "The Life of the Chinese Girl in Singapore" which appeared in the London Queen (9). The boredom, expectations and training of local girls of her time were highlighted in the article. The underlying theme throughout the article was the subordinate position of women then and the discrimination that prevailed in her time which robbed girls and women of their basic rights to equal educational opportunities, to free choice of life partners, to freedom of movement and, instead, restricted them to the monotony of housework and the production of offspring for the next generation. Miss Lee wrote:

> The Chinese girl's life in the Straits Settlements though freer and less irksome than that of her sister in China, is not an enviable one. Its monotony is intolerable....
>
> The happiest and merriest period of her life is that spent during her childhood, when no restraint whatsoever is put upon her actions. She is permitted to associate with boys and romp about the house and streets (there being no nursery) to her heart's content.... Her seclusion dates from the time when she arrives at the age of 13 or 14, and everything considered unladylike is forbidden her.
>
> As soon as she is 13 or 14 she.... has to undergo a course of training in cooking and sewing. These two are essential accomplishments to achieve, without which she has scant hope of securing a good match.
>
> The life is indeed lonely and dull.... She is never permitted to venture outside the doors of her abode, unless to pay occasional visits to her closest relations. When she goes out it is in conveyances which are entirely covered up, and either her mother or an aged relative acts as her chaperone. She lives in a sphere of her own,

quite out of touch with the society of men....

> The Chinese girl is seldom provided with an adequate education, the passing of the third and fourth standard being deemed sufficient.... Parents regard it as a waste of money to educate their daughters, who are supposed to be incapable of maintaining the family in time of need, seeing that according to Chinese customs, it is indecent and disgraceful for girls to work for their living, which must of necessity entail their going out incessantly and thus exposing themselves to the public gaze.
>
> The age at which the Chinese girl is married is either 18 or 19, sometimes two or three years earlier, as is common among the wealthier classes. It is the parents who bring about the matches and make all the arrangements. In most cases the marriage takes place between people who are total strangers to one another. The girl is so completely under the control of her parents that her wishes are not consulted at all: in fact, she is entirely ignorant of the proceedings which are carried out until the matter is quite settled. Even then, she is not informed of the identity, position, age, appearance etc. of her future husband....
>
> The life of the newly made wife would be rendered far happier if there were no mother-in-law, who makes her lead a wretched existence by behaving tyrannically in the house. This tyranny and unjust treatment of the daughter-in-law is a special privilege of the mother-in-law, who exercises it without the least compunction or mercy. The poor wife becomes the drudge of the household, and must be ready to wait on her mother-in-law at all hours....
>
> (Lee (9), pp.498-500)

No Singapore girl in the early years of the 20th century would ever dream that events which took place a thousand miles away from their shores, in the native land of their parents and grandparents, would affect and change the course of their humdrum existence with all its restrictions and unequal treatment. 1911 saw the decline and fall of the Ching Dynasty and its Manchu emperors at the hands of Dr.

Sun Yat-sen and his Nationalist supporters. In the cities where the intelligentsia gathered, where a new social and national consciousness prevailed (18) and where women were accepted as equal partners in nation building, changes began which were to sweep across the country. The Nationalist leaders who acknowledged the dynamic force of female power as they fought and died side by side with the men to oust the Manchus, not only abolished footbinding but also gave women the rights to be educated, to participate freely in politics, to be involved in labour union movements and above all, as Wong (18) stresses, to be granted freedom in the choice of their future husbands and to initiate divorce proceedings. For centuries, girls were even segregated from their own brothers, other male relatives and servants in the household as Miss Lee has pointed out above but, in 1919, co-education was adopted in schools and universities. The feminist movement began to have more impact. Women's rights organisations and women's unions under various headings were established across the country (18).

These radical reforms took many conservative Chinese by surprise and, initially, they were shocked at the extent of autonomy granted to their womenfolk who had served them hand and foot since time immemorial. Above all, the liberation of women conflicted with the basic teachings of Confucius, thus, in many cases, girls who came from families where the head of the family clung to the traditional belief in the inferior position of women, continued to suffer under the rigid code of the Confucian cult. However, in those

families where the male members were more sympathetic and generous, though at first reluctant to relinquish absolutely control over their womenfolk, some girls were sent to school to be educated. And in the period 1911 to 1917, 5 Chinese medium girls' schools were established in Singapore. Despite limited educational backgrounds as revealed by Miss Lee's article, a large number of women sought economic independence in the 1920s to the 1950s by working as clerks and secretaries in the public and private sectors, by becoming primary teachers or by joining the nursing profession as midwives and nurses. A handful of girls from upper class homes were given the opportunity by their parents to proceed beyond secondary education to tertiary education. They joined Raffles College or Edward VII College of Medicine and formed the nucleus of highly-educated women in early Singapore. Today, a few of these pioneer women are still alive and the author has drawn out their views regarding their life experiences, their education and the position of women then and now, in face to face interviews with them. These oral history interviews are the focus of Chapter 8.

The Japanese occupation of Singapore and its aftermath was a signal factor which drew thousands of Chinese women out of their sheltered homes to join the labour market. The sudden loss of their husbands and in many cases even their teenage sons who were executed by the Japanese, left these widows with little or no means of

support for themselves and their other living children. Those unable to face up to the competition and the rigour of working life, sought refuge in remarriage, many allowing themselves to become secondary wives or kept mistresses. With few opportunities open to them during the Japanese occupation when most firms and businesses were put out of operation, many women and young girls had to sell their favours to Japanese officers and soldiers in order to keep their families and themselves alive. The hardier and more adventurous ones, however, sought outside employment in jobs that they felt they were able to handle. For those with some years of schooling, it was not too difficult for them to become clerks, book-keepers, bank tellers or shop assistants especially when there were ample vacancies to fill up after the liberation.

The late 1940s and early 1950s saw Singapore's economy at the lowest level because of the massive damage inflicted by the Japanese. It took years to repair or rebuild bombed buildings, offices and docks and to set its entire economic machinery functioning effectively again. Growth and expansion were slow but gradual. Thus, after the initial intake of employees to start businesses going, job opportunities were few and far between. In 1957, out of the total number of 471,918 in employment, the number of females employed was only 84,210 and they constituted 17.8%. Job discrimination against women existed then on a wide scale. Educational and training opportunities were not accessible to women while unfavourable terms of contract and tenure (3)

and especially wide disparity in earnings prevailed. For example,in the manufacturing sector in 1961, the average weekly earnings of males was $44.03 while that of females was $21.90 and this represents less than 50% that of the male workers (23). Not only were women offered poor pay scales, they were also passed over in more responsible supervisory posts. For many years after the liberation, large numbers of women were concentrated in semi-skilled jobs as manual workers in restaurants and beauty parlours, as filing clerks, gas station attendants, telephone operators and in the manufacturing sector in labour-intensive industries such as garment and electronic industries.

Chinese women, who for generations could not be heard or seen in the main hall or in the presence of male members of the same household as part of good female upbringing, could now walk freely along the streets unescorted. With economic independence, particularly after the Pacific War, they began to adopt Western styles of attire, permed their hair short, sported sun glasses and had boy friends openly. Where segregation was possible in the large sprawling mansions of China with their different sections and courtyards, the many storeyed houses with their 2 or 3 bedrooms, a sitting cum dining room and a kitchen, it was quite impossible to carry out the practice. Owing to the scarcity of land, even the bungalows of the rich merchants could not match up to a quarter the size of a

mandarin's house. Thus, with the gradual elimination of this practice, there grew a better relationship between father and daughter and brother and sister. Men were still looked up to with greater respect than women and the father with awe but, generally, the position of women has improved within the home. By the 1950s, few heads of households treated their wives and daughters as underlings. In society, although they continued to remain insignificant and secondary to their husbands or sons, their presence was acknowledged and they were accepted as part of the community.

4.3 The position and role of Malay women from 1819 to 1958

4.3.1 The position and role of women in pre-Islam and post-Islam periods

A review of the early history of the Chinese in Section 4.2 of the chapter reveals that before the impact of Confucianism, Chinese women were generally accorded much respect and treated as equal partners in the family set-up. Their position and status, however, deteriorated as the Confucian ideals were exploited to the full by generations of chauvinistic males to their advantage. When the Temenggong of Johore crossed the narrow strait separating the Malay Peninsula from the island of Singapore in 1811, he and his entourage of about a hundred Malays were already followers of the Islam religion. As early as the 15th century, Arab merchants and preachers had spread the words of the Prophet Muhammed throughout South-East Asia so by the

19th century, the majority of Malays in the Malay Peninsula and the natives of the neighbouring countries, namely Sumatra, Java, Borneo and the Philippines had embraced the Islamic religion. Like their sisters elsewhere, the status and role of South-East Asian women are shaped by their religious and cultural heritage. The position and role of Muslim women both at home and in society were and still are, determined by the tenets of the Islamic religion.

A number of verses from the Qur'an assert the the superiority of men over women like this quotation ('Women':verse 38):

> Men are the manager of the affairs of women, for that God has preferred in bounty one of them over another, and for that they have expended of their property. Righteous women are therefore obedient.... And those you fear may be rebellious, admonish, banish them to their couches, and beat them.... (24)

and allow them to marry up to four wives as well as encouraging sexual use of female slaves ('Women':verses 28-29):

> Lawful for you, beyond all that (that is, all sexual relations forbidden because of close kinship), is that you may seek, using your wealth, in wedlock and not in licence. Such wives as you may enjoy thereby, give them their wages apportionate.... Anyone of you who has not the affluence to be able to marry believing freewomen in wedlock, let him take believing handmaids that your right hands own.... (24).

But it should also be noted that other Qur'anic verses stress the equal status of women in the eyes of the Maker.

"Fear your Lord who created you from a single soul", is but a classic example which denotes that the souls of men and women are absolutely equal in God's eyes, without even the responsibility of original sin weighing down upon women (25). The Qur'an does not single out Eve as the cause of man's fall and when both had eaten the forbidden fruit, both were scolded by Allah.

A look into the past reveals that prior to the establishment of the Islamic religion in Arabia, the home of the Prophet Muhammed (who lived from 570 to 632 A.D.), women were particularly vulnerable while their rights were closely linked with the tribal way of life their people had known for centuries (25). The wandering nomads were known to practise female infanticide in times of famine and women generally were not equal to men in the eyes of tribal law. In adulthood their indispensable contribution under the harsh desert conditions placed them on a better footing and gained them much respect, more so than their counterparts in the city. While the men engaged in trade and guarded the camp, the women tended to the herds and produced wool, meat, cheese, yogurt - food for their consumption and items to be traded in exchange for grains and weapons and other necessities (25). Although they rarely participated in council meetings, they could make their views known. Forays by other tribes often occurred and during such instances, women acted as nurses, cheerleaders and many even fought side by side with their menfolk. Should they be captured by the enemy, it was not uncommon for male members of their

tribe to come to their rescue by storming the enemy's camp.

By around 400 A.D., many nomadic tribes began giving up the difficult type of life they were leading in the open and often unfriendly desert, for a less hazardous life in the towns and cities. Kinship ties slowly but surely began to break down as communal sharing and the dependence on women's equal contribution to the labour and family budget were no longer applicable. With the rise of individualism, the patrilineal form of marriage began to gain popularity (25). Before the exodus from the desert to the city, among some tribes, it was a common practice for a woman to be married to several visiting husbands at the same time. Such husbands who were not kin, merely visited the woman at her home. There was no need to contest the paternity of a child born under such arrangement for all the woman had to do was to summon her husbands and publicly announce which one among them she believed to be the child's father and her decision was accepted as law (25). The child or children born of such unions belonged to the matrilineal family and were supported by communal property managed by her brothers and maternal uncles.

No longer bound to strive for the benefit of others, nor dependent on the goodwill and charity of others to survive, the city dweller began to develop new concepts of family life. Having struggled by himself to build up a fortune, the self-made man preferred to have a wife and children that he could call his own and to whom he could

leave his hard-earned wealth. To ensure that his wife bore only his children, she had to live under close supervision in his house (25). His wife now became his personal property without rights and as such was denied any form of automonous life.

Throughout his mission, Muhammed had preached compassion and consideration for women in many areas. They enjoyed the right to initiate divorce, to participate in business and to own property and to be educated. However, as the Islamic community grew into an empire most of these rights were gradually taken away from them. Women had fought in battles with the men and had cheered them on to victories, but with the expansion of the Arabic Empire from the time of the Prophet's death, and the presence of a great army ever ready and eager to march to battle for gold, women warriors and cheerleaders were no longer required. As the Muslim hordes won battle after battle, the Caliphs and generals began to amass great wealth. From their Persian and Byzantine subjects, new fads, namely the use of the veil and the maintaining of harems, became fashionable among the nobility. Purdah, the Urdu word for curtain or screen, is "an extreme form of sex-role differentiation which demands the wearing of the veil by women and the strict seclusion of women to protect their modesty" (Saifullah Khan (26),p.224). Arab conquerors began to shut their wives, sisters and daughters in their private apartments and eunuchs were stationed outside harem doors to stop all unwelcomed male

visitors and other callers. Only the ruler and those approved by him were allowed to enter. Soon the rich adopted this practice by building houses with central courtyards to which the womenfolk could step out to get a breath of fresh air without being observed by outsiders and strangers.

The harem system thus adopted by the early Arab conquerors was similar to the court system practised by the early Chinese rulers centuries ago. The segregation of the sexes initiated by the Chinese emperors was also adopted by the nobles and the gentry class thus, in both cultures, they culminated in the deterioration of the rights and status of women. Footbinding may be seen as the supreme subjugation of Chinese women for generations: while there are other interpretations of the meaning of the veil, Minai (25) considers that the compulsory wearing of the veil had the same symbolic significance for Muslim women. She points out that seclusion banished the well-educated and potentially most influential women from the outside world and in so doing, transformed them into sex objects for the pleasure of the menfolk.

The licence given by Muhammed to his followers to marry up to four women at one time, carried with it certain implications often disregarded by many men to the detriment of the women involved. A polygamous husband is required to distribute not only equal amounts of money, jewellery and material goods to each of the four wives but also sexual

attention. According to the prophet, sexual satisfaction is every woman's conjugal right (25).

As a protection against widowhood or divorce, another important consideration for women stressed by Muhammed, is the giving of a dowry to the bride upon marriage. This dowry is her exclusive property to be used by her in any way she pleases. With the husband solely responsible for the maintenance of the household and the children, she need not have to contribute her share to upkeeep the family. Should she remain married to her husband up to the time of his death, she is legally entitled to inherit part of his property, though her share would be less than that of her children's (25). Both sons and daughters are entitled to their father's inheritance: the daughters are entitled to half that of the sons.

4.3.2 The position and role of Singapore Malay women in the 19th and early 20th centuries

Against this backdrop of conflicting Qur'anic interpretations which favour women in some areas while subjecting them to absolute control by men in others, Malay women in Singapore were thus nurtured and indoctrinated. The Qur'an did not forbid women to receive a good education but generations of selfish fathers had refused to allow their daughters to go to school for fear of their being enticed by their male classmates and thus lose their chastity. When attempts were made by the early British educationists, particularly by A.M. Skinner, the first

Inspector of Schools in the Straits Settlements, to set up a school for Malay girls in 1884 at Telok Blanga it had 60 girls on its roll initially but three years later, the school had to shut down when no girl reported for class. Lack of education combined with the cultural ethos, confined Malay girls to the home. Those forced to fend for themselves could only take on menial jobs as washerwomen, nannies, cooks or housekeepers. This situation prevailed for decades well into the middle of the 20th century.

Marriage, as Wong (3) notes, is a contract to the Muslim Malays in Peninsula Malaya and Singapore. Unlike the Chinse who view divorce as a stigma and try to avoid it as far as possible, among the Malays, divorce, as Firth (27) points out, is "a very common feature of the village social life, much more common, in fact, then polygyny" (Firth (27), p.23). During the three months waiting period before the divorce is granted and finalised, the husband is expected to continue to support the wife. It is also customary for the husband to set aside a sum as a gift to his ex-wife upon their divorce. In this way, women are not left to starve or have to turn to prostitution in order to survive, especially in the last century and even as late as the last four decades when few Malay women emerged from their homes to join the labour market.

The provision for women's welfare before, during and after their marriage show the concern of Muhammed for women. But today, it is in the matter of the right to

initiate divorce and in the institution of polygyny as Wong (3) stresses, that the subordinate position of Malay women is most obvious and discriminatory. A point to note is that in this region, Malay women, unlike their sisters particularly in Saudi Arabia and Iran, are not subjected to segregation and the compulsory wearing of the veil. However, they share the same unfair treatment as Islam women throughout the Islam world in that they are only allowed to have one husband at a time while Islamic men enjoy the privilege of having four wives at a time. While Islamic men are permitted to marry Christian and Jewish women, Islamic women are restricted to marrying only Islamic men. In Singapore, before the Shariah Court made its appearance after 1959, Islamic men who wished to divorce their spouses need only register the divorce with a kathi or religious preacher who was an official appointed by the government to register Muslim marriages and divorces. The men were not required to offer any reasons for desiring to break off from their wives, since they alone have the right to unilateral divorce by pronouncing their intention to divorce them on three occasions, or 'three talaks', as they are commonly known in Singapore and Malaya.

Although the Qur'an gives women the right to sue their husbands for divorce, provided that they return the dowry to their husbands, the Shariah courts in most countries today, as Minai (25) notes, are of the consensus that a woman cannot sue for divorce unless this option is

clearly specified in the marriage contract. Even then, she is allowed to operate within a limited number of causes such as: the husband's impotence; his affliction with an incurable disease; his neglect and failure to support his family or physical abuse. Two countries, notably Tunisia and Pakistan, have allowed women to obtain divorce on grounds of mental incompatibility. However, in the first country, women who initiate divorce proceedings on this ground, are not granted alimony while in Pakistan, the women will be free only if they return the dowry to their spouses (25).

The Pacific War had not only devastated Asian countries and resulted in the loss of male labour power but it also led to the liberation of women of all races. Chinese, Malay and Indian parents spurred on by the waves of nationalism that swept across the Eastern seaboard, began to condescend to allowing their daughters to be educated and go out to work for a living. Side by side with the Chinese and Indian girls, Malay girls with primary, secondary and some even with tertiary education began to fill up the vacancies left open after the war.

A further impetus to the emancipation of Malay women was the encouragement given through education as endorsed in the 1955 All-Party Committee Report which emphasised equal treatment for all the four main educational streams and the PAP's manifesto of 1959 which stressed the establishment of Malay as the national language of the new

nation soon to be set up and the granting of free primary, secondary and tertiary education for all Malays. With the other races compelled to learn Malay in order to function effectively in the projected future industrialised nation state, it would have reflected a lack of wisdom and foresight if Malay girls continued to be illiterate, unable to master the finer points of their own language. A complete turn around of attitude resulted. Not only did Malay parents enrol their daughters in vernacular or English primary schools, they even encouraged them to go as far as they were academically able. Gradually those who joined the labour force began to move up the social ladder and to adopt Western styles of attire. The road to educational and economic liberation has been a long and bumpy one but compared to many less developed countries in Asia, the Middle East and Africa, Malay women in Singapore have achieved much freedom to date.

4.4 The position and role of Indian women from 1819 to 1958

4.4.1 The position and role of Indian women prior to the 19th century

The Indian community, the third largest group of of Singaporeans who make up 6.4% of the total population today, originate from mainland India. The early Indian immigrants were predominantly Tamils from Southern India but today, Indians from the Northern states, Pakistanis, Bangladashis and Sri Lankans make up the 160,600 Indians in

the last count taken on 22 June 1984 (1). Although Indian girls today are generally given free access to equal educational opportunities by their parents and Indian women are permitted to seek outside employment, they are still subjected to a patrilineal family system which favours men in matters such as inheritance, in marriage and divorce and they are still placed in a position of inferiority in society. This has been the result of centuries of religious and cultural ethos ingrained in the caste system which the Indians have accepted as part and parcel of their existence.

Prior to 300 B.C., in Vedic times, Kapur (28) points out that women enjoyed complete equality with men in the realm of religion, as studies of Hindu social organisations and of women's status in ancient India by scholars such as Cormack (29), Prabhu (30), Indra (31) and Shastri (32) reveal. Within the family, the woman was respected as a daughter, a wife and a mother and the birth of the female child was as well received as that of a male offspring. There was no discrimination regarding her education for she was allowed to be taught the same subjects as the male siblings in the household and for as long as the latter were being tutored or when it was time for her to marry. Although she was usually married off at the age of sixteen or seventeen, she was not totally ignorant of the identity of her future husband being given a voice in the selection of her life partner (28). Not only did she also have some freedom of movement but she could also

participate in public affairs and take up the teaching profession. Widows were not confined to a monastic existence as their later generations of sisters were, but were allowed to remarry. Women were even allowed to initiate divorce. These liberties therefore, indicate that women enjoyed a respectable position in society as well as in the home.

However, a different pattern began to emerge after 300 B.C. Gradually but steadily, the status of women began to decline. Three major factors that contributed to the dramatic change in attitude to women were the political and religious events that took place from 326 B.C. onwards and the overpowering influence of the Laws of Manu which established the perpetual tutelage for women (28).

The first of the notable political events was the sudden arrival of Alexander the Great whose Macedonian army crossed the Hindu Kush Mountains and swept down the Indus Valley to the River Beas in 326 B.C. (33). Although the Macedonian army did not establish a permanent empire in India since they refused to continue fighting and Alexander was forced to turn back, their appearance had aroused among the early Indians, the fear and need to protect their womenfolk from the licentious behaviour of outside, foreign invaders.

The purely Hindu society which had dominated India from the time of the coming of the Aryans who settled and controlled the northern parts of India between 2000 and 1000

B.C., was next threatened by the impact of Buddhism which spread rapidly as a result of the vast conquests of Asoka whose empire extended from Afghanistan in the West, to Bengal in the East, and down south to as far as the state of Kalinga. Asoka who ruled from 273 to 232 B.C., was a devout Buddhist. The teachings of Gautama Buddha which emphasised that all men are equal in the eyes of God, was in total contrast to Hinduism which divided the people into castes thus discriminating the rich and powerful from the poor and weak. Buddhism and Hinduism soon became bitter rivals (28). Although Buddhism does not emphasise the total subjugation of women, it does favour men in more ways than women. Besides the influence of Buddhism upon the Hindu Indian culture, early Indians were also indirectly influenced by their neighbours to the north-east, that is, the Chinese who from the fifth century B.C. had begun adopting the rigid code of right conduct of Confucius which heightened the status of men and lowered the status of women.

The most effective military-cum-religious influence came from the Muslims. From Afghanistan, Muslim Sultans with their hordes swept across vast regions of India and forced thousands by the sword, to embrace Islam. Today, one-third of the population of India are Muslims. The marauding Muslim armies not only ravaged the country but also took Hindu women to wife. With each invasion and defeat, the plight of Hindu women worsened and with each generation, their status and position both at home and in

society began to erode.

Manu, the Hindu law giver preached the obedience of women to their father in childhood, to their husbands in marriage and to their sons in their declining years or in widowhood for women were seen as temptresses and should be put under strict surveillance (3):

> She should do nothing independently in her own house.
> In childhood subject to her father, in youth to her husband, and when her husband is dead to her sons,
> She should never enjoy independence....
>
> She should always be cheerful,
> and skilful in her domestic duties,
> and her household vessels well cleansed,
> and her hand tight on the purse strings....(34).

To Manu, women were considered inferior in every aspect while men were duly accorded all the freedom and privileges that went with their elevated status. No longer was man seen as a mate and life partner on equal plane with his spouse but to quote Manu again:

> Though he be uncouth and prone to pleasure
> though he have no good points at all
> the virtuous wife should ever
> worship her lord as God (34).

By 700 A.D., the position of women had fallen to such a low level that she was practically, as Kapadia (35) and Altekar (36) assert, under the absolute control of men and dependent on them for everything. Female infanticide was widely practised and the privilege of initiating divorce, or remarrying in the case of divorcees and widows,

were denied them. Instead, women were encouraged to display the greatest act of devotion, love and faithfulness to their deceased husbands by self-immolation on the funeral pyres of their husbands. This practice was so vigorously enforced in certain parts of India that women who hesitated to join their spouses on the cremation pyres, were bodily carried and fed to the flames by male members of the family or kin. The purdah system with its segregation and veiling adopted from the Muslims and incorporated into the caste system, further lowered their status.

For over a thousand years, the Indian women continued to slave and toil for their families and their husbands. Besides being denied all rights, a woman's manifestation was, to quote Dubois and Beauchamp (37),

> ..to minister to man's physical pleasures and wants; she was considered incapable of developing any of those higher mental qualities which would make her more worthy of consideration and also more capable of playing a useful part in life.
> (Dubois and Beauchamp (37), p.336).

Thus, prior to the introduction of sweeping reforms by British Governor-Generals like Bentinck and Dalhousie in the early years of the 19th century, the Indian woman, socially, legally, ideologically and morally, as Kapur (28) stresses, was almost a nonentity.

Where the women of the noble and gentry classes in early China and the Muslim Abbasid, Umayyad and Indian Empires were the main victims of subjugation and other discriminatory practices that prevailed among the various

ethnic groups within the two communities, it was mainly the women belonging to the upper caste rural families or the traditional urban families who were affected by the numerous disabilities mentioned above. Although education was out of their reach and they had to meekly accept child marriage, polygyny and were denied rights to inheritance , women of the lower caste rural families were not required to wear the veil and were accorded the right to seek divorce and, in the case of widows, to remarry. Owing to their much valued active participation in the open fields, sowing and gathering in the crops often working side by side with their menfolk, they were exempt from strict adherence to complete segregation between the sexes, as laid down by the purdah system.

4.4.2 The position and role of Singapore Indian women in the 19th and 20th centuries

It was against such a religious and socio-cultural background that the first batches of Indian men and women settled in Singapore in the early 19th century. The ratio of men to women was approximately 5:1 even as late as 1931 and the margin was wider in the 19th century. For decades, it was quite impossible for Indians to maintain a normal family life due to the acute shortage of females, therefore, it was not unusual for men to resort to acts of infidelity and the maintaining of secondary wives among the local women. The pronounced absence of a religious caste to carry out its traditional culture-preservation functions soon led

to the loss and misinterpretation of a number of traditional values and practices (38). However, basically, the Indian community continued with most of the customs and practices which their forefathers, generations before them, had believed in. In the patrilineal family system the most senior male head of the household ruled supreme as head of the household; his word was law. Today, the well-brought up daughter still obeys and accords great respect to her father and accepts his counsel and judgement in all matters even in the choice of her future husband while the good wife is confined to the house and the kitchen - her prime duty of course being that of serving her husband and lord, hand and foot.

In the 19th century, very few girls enjoyed the privilege of being sent to school or being tutored at home. It was only at the turn of the century that Indian parents began to grant greater freedom to their daughters who were permitted to attend classes and in some cases even to engage in remunerative work. The many acts which were passed in India throughout the 19th century had a positive effect in bringing about a change in the attitude of fathers to their daughters, husbands to their wives and men to women in general. The abolition of the Sati Act of 1829, the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856, the Child Marriage Abolition Act of 1860 and the Civil Marriage Act of 1872 respectively, almost erased the self-immolation of widows upon their husbands' deaths, granted a new lease of life to widows by allowing

them to remarry, raised the age of marriage for girls to fourteen years, sanctioned the marriage between members of different castes and above all, enforced monogamy. 1874 saw the passing of the Married Women's Property Act which further liberalised the married woman by permitting her to own and inherit property as well as the right to retain her own earnings. Slowly though these new changes were accepted by the entire Indian population in the continent and abroad, they were gradually incorporated into the fabric of their social and cultural life.

Before the outbreak of the Second World War, Indian nationalists had begun to agitate for self-rule and independence and together with these political ideals, a better deal for men and women of all classes. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the acknowledged Father of Modern India, Sarojini Naidu and Mohandas K. Ganhdi were but a few of the outstanding Indian personalities who had championed the cause of women's education in the mainland. Their call was answered as schools for girls began springing up throughout the country and by the last decade of the struggle for independence, thousands of educated women had joined the ranks of the nationalists. The contribution that a woman with a sound all-round education is able to make, is unquestionable, even within a male-oriented society. As nurses and doctors, they tend to the sick and dying, as office workers, they lighten the load of correspondence and filing for their employers, as teachers they impart knowledge to the ignorant as well as mould their character

and as wives and daughters, they help to alleviate financial hardship in the family by seeking outside employment.

Inspired by the examples set by the modern nationalist leaders who openly accorded women their due respect and rights, and realising the many and varied advantages that go with giving their daughters an education, Indian parents began allowing them to go to school. From 1945 onwards after the liberation, when the need arose for greater female participation in the services, administration, trade and commercial sectors due to the shortage of males, Indian girls began to leave their homes to join the rank and file of the labour force with their parents' blessings. Today, they can be found in practically all branches of industry, contributing effectively to the growth and development of Singapore's economy. Thus, although males still dominate the family and the outside world and female participation is few and far between in society and politics, Indian women since the last four decades have achieved freedom of movement and some freedom of choice in the selection of their life partners, subject to the approval of their parents, besides being given a chance to be literate and to enjoy economic independence.

4.5 The education of Singapore girls from 1819 to 1958

In Chapter 3, we saw that the development of education in Singapore under British rule was largely geared

to the preparation of boys for the labour market. The education of girls came second in the scheme of things and was influenced by the Western missionary conception of the proper role of women. This view of women coincided with the cultural attitudes fostered in Chinese, Malay and Indian families for most of the 19th century. Asian families on the whole did not believe that their daughters should be educated. A popular saying of the Chinese goes, "Lack of learning is a woman's virtue" (Wong (39), p.253). Thus, when the early Chinese immigrants came to settle in Singapore, they continued to uphold this ideal and the majority of girls were denied an education. The Malays too did not believe in their daughters being educated as their primary goal in life was to serve their husbands, to procreate and to confine the greater part of their lives to the kitchen and to the household. The Indians generally held the same views as the Chinese and Malays, though in some cases where their teenage sons were able to help bring in additional income, these boys had to miss school while their sisters were allowed to attend classes instead for a few years (40).

It was the Christian missionaries, namely the LMS, the Roman Catholic sisters, and the trustees of the Singapore Institution Free Schools who were the first people who took an interest in the education of girls partly in order to perpetuate the Christian ideal of womanhood, that is of wife and mother, and not as equal members of society. It was only in 1842 that the first school for girls, St. Margaret's Girls' School, was opened by the LMS. This was

followed two years later by the establishment of Raffles Girls' School by the trustees of the Singapore Institution Free Schools. The primary objective of this school was that of a shelter for girls from, as Waldhauser (41) points out, the many temptations to which they appeared to be exposed. Emphasis was placed on moral and religious education while some general education was taught.

The first Catholic girls' school was established in 1854 after Father Jean Marie Beurel (See Chapter 3, Section 3.2.1) had purchased a house at the corner of Victoria Street and Bras Basah Road for $4,000. This school was placed under the charge of the Sisters of the Charitable Institution of the Holy Infant Jesus under the direction of Mother St.Mathilda who arrived on 6 February 1854 with three other sisters of her order. By 1862, the Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus had 145 girls on the roll in the upper and lower departments. Besides teaching, the nuns also took in abandoned babies and gave shelter to widows. Thus Father Beurel's intention to establish an institution 'on behalf of the females of all classes and conditions in the island including a school for respectable ladies, an orphanage and an asylum for destitute widows' (Waldhauser (41), p.19) was achieved. The girls were taught to read French and English. By disposing of French goods and selling the needlework pieces of the pupils, Walhauser (41) tells us that the Convent was able to maintain itself comfortably with a revenue of about $10,000 annually.

Although the Malay community made little contribution to the progress of Malay Education in contrast to the Chinese whose wealthy clans and asociations supported and donated generously to the establishment of new schools and the financing of the management of these schools, the British Government was responsible for the supervision and maintenance of Malay schools. Despite this patronage, little progress was seen for decades for as Zahoor Ahmad (42) points out, two factors had impeded the development of Malay Education in the latter half of the 19th century. The first was the inadequate supply of qualified Malay teachers and secondly, the reluctance of Malay parents to send their daughters to school. In fact, as early as 1858, an attempt was made by Mrs. Keasberry of the LMS to start a Malay school for girls but the scheme fell through, due to lack of support from the Malay community. In 1884, the first Malay girls' school was formally established at Telok Blanga. It had an initial roll of 60 girls. Three years later, not a single girl was in attendance and eventually the school was shut down.

The turn of the century saw a revival in interest in the education of Malay girls. The man responsible for this was R.O. Winstedt, the Director of Education. In 1918, he appointed a qualified Lady Supervisor of Malay Girls' Schools and in 1925, an Assistant Supervisor for Malay Education in Singapore was appointed to oversee the promotion of equal educational opportunities for both boys and girls (42). Under Winstedt's overall supervision then,

Malay Education made some progress.

When the first two mission girls' schools and Raffles Girls' School were established, the majority of the pupils who made up the classes were Chinese. They ranged from orphans to the daughters of rich merchants and middle class English-educated families whose fathers were professionals, for example, teachers and civil servants. The establishment of Chinese girls' schools, however, came about in the early years of the 20th century with Hwa-chia Girls' School which was started in 1905 but it closed down a few years later (43). However, in the 1910s, five other girls' schools were established, namely Ch'ung-hwa in 1911, Ch'ung-fu in 1915, Ch'ung-pen in 1916, Nan-hwa in 1917 and Nanyang Girls' School in 1917 (43). The establishment of these schools coincided with the fall of the Manchu regime in mainland China and the upsurge of new socialist, democratic ideologies which the Chinese nationalists upheld and incorporated into their new regime. Sweeping reforms in family and marriage laws and the granting of equal educational opportunities for women (See Section 4.2.2), were introduced and these new social, educational and political concepts were swiftly adopted by the overseas Chinese in Singapore. With the opening of these schools, Chinese girls were given an opportunity to develop their academic potential at least up to post primary level.

As for the education of Tamil girls, credit is due to the American Methodist Mission. In 1887, the

missionaries established the Methodist Girls' School primarily for the education of Tamil girls but owing to the comparatively small number of Indians in the population and the conservative attitude of Indian parents as regards the education of girls, the number of Tamil pupils was soon outnumbered by girls from the other races. However, a different trend set in in the early years of the 20th century. In the Tamil vernacular co-educational schools in many instances, girls began to outnumber boys (40), this being due to the fact that boys in their teens were encouraged to go out to supplement the family income. As Tate (44) points out, the majority of Tamils even in the 20th century, still belonged to the lower strata of society as port labourers, road sweepers and railway workers.

Under the 1947 Ten Years Programme which accorded equal opportunities to both boys and girls of all races and the provision of universal free six-year primary education (See Chapter 3, Section 3.2.2), more Chinese, Malay and Indian parents began to realise the benefits of sending their daughters to school for academic, social and economic reasons. The emancipation of women in the East in countries like China and Japan and in the West particularly, was beginning to have some effect on the conservative attitudes of Asian parents. In some cases, girls, especially those from better-to-do families, were even allowed to proceed to Raffles College to study for an Arts or a Science degree, to the Medical School to take up medicine and to become teachers and nurses.

In the next decade, with the establishment of the Ministry of Education which went into full swing with its school building programme, and the introduction of co-education in all boys' schools to ensure that every girl obtained a place in school, the pupil population of girls steadily increased. By 1959, there were 320,977 pupils in primary and secondary school and of this total, about 40% comprise girl pupils. Further discussions of the education of girls from 1959 onwards to the present day will take place in Chapter 5.

4.6 Singapore women's participation in politics prior to 1959

In the pre-Confucian, pre-Islam and pre-Manu periods in China, the Middle East and India respectively, as pointed out earlier, women not only enjoyed unrestricted freedom of movement and socialisation with members of the opposite sex and access to equal educational opportunities but were also granted rights to participate in religion and politics. After the death of Muhammed and before the adoption of the purdah which relegated Muslim women to inferior status through the compulsory wearing of the veil and to segregation, some women such as Umm Salama and Aysha the two widows of the prophet, had featured prominently in the struggle for power in the political hierarchy (25). Poetesses and women cheerleaders had lent their relentless support to the early Muslim armies as they marched on their conquests. Early Indian women too had been an inspiration

to their society in council and in war and Chinese historians have not failed to record the contributions of both the peasant women who toiled in the fields in the ancient civilisations and the empresses and concubines who were influential in changing the courses of history in the early dynasties.

However, the centuries of subservience and serfdom in male-dominated societies that followed after the onset of Confucianism, Islam and the laws of Manu, had culminated in modern Singapore women of the 19th and early years of the 20th centuries being submissive, obedient and devoid of will and ability to decide even their own future. As pointed out in Sections 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4, the teachings of Confucianism, Islam and Hinduism all favour males over females. Within the home, the male became the acknowledged head of the family who controlled not only the purse strings but also the social relationships and activities of all his female members. Women were excluded from active participation in politics and religious ceremonies. Being confined to the home, economically dependent on their husbands and male members of their family and with little or no education, they were thus unable to speak out or assert their authority both in the private sphere and in society.

As early as the turn of the 19th century, Asian reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1770-1833) of India, began to agitiate for social reforms for Indian women. He strongly supported the idea of inheritance rights for women

for he felt that economic dependence made a woman weak (45). He even visited England in 1830 to appeal against the decision of the Privy Council to maintain existing laws relating to widow burning in India. Other Indian social reformers who followed in his footsteps were Annie Besant (1847-1933) and Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949). They were both actively involved with the women's emancipation movement in India, encouraged the education of girls and both held the position of President of the Indian National Congress. Annie Besant who was born British, dedicated forty-two years of her life from 1891 to 1933, to assisting the Indian National Movement in its struggle against British rule. Sarojini Naidu from Hyderabad, was educated in London and Cambridge. Both women were undoubtedly influenced by the British women's struggles for recognition of their basic rights and privileges, in the early years of the 20th century. Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst's Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), who called themselves 'suffragettes', carried out 'Votes for Women' demonstrations in public meetings, sent representations to Downing Street, interrupted proceedings in the House of Commons and did everything possible to attract attention so that their demands would be granted (46). Later these suffragettes even chained themselves to the railings in the gallery of the Commons, set fire to public buildings, fired catapults full of stones from the tops of double-decker buses and even slashed pictures in the National Gallery. Their zeal and determination contributed, in part, to the granting of

female suffrage for women 30 years and over in 1918 and for all women 21 years and above in 1928.

In the West, the granting of partial voting rights to women had, in fact, existed as early as 1863 in Sweden and from 1869 in the United States of America. However, the granting of completely equal voting rights for men and women first took place in 1893 in New Zealand. Subsequently, other Western and Eastern countries too allowed their women to enjoy this privilege (47). The first Asian countries to extend the vote to women were Sri Lanka in 1931, Burma and the Philippines in 1935, China in 1947 and India and Indonesia in 1949.

In 1952, in its first general elections, Indian women actively participated and 120 were either elected or nominated to the state or central legislatures (28). In fact, India can boast of being one of the major countries in the world after Sri Lanka to have had a woman as head of its government. In China, the modern Chinese woman who had made a great impact on Chinese politics was Madam Soong Ching-ling, the second wife of the Nationalist leader Dr. Sun Yat-sen. Just before the death of her husband, she teamed up with the Communists and for years sat on the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and for two decades was one of four Vice-Presidents of the Chinese Republic - a rare honour bestowed upon a woman in a culture which for centuries had placed women on an inferior footing and subjected them to the service of their menfolk and

children in the home.

Unlike British and Indian women, for example, who took to the streets in the struggle for woman suffrage, Singapore women did not have to struggle for the vote. They were given the franchise in 1957. A number of women, however, were actively involved in anti-Japanese and anti-Colonial movements in the early 1940s and 1950s. They worked behind the scenes in such organisations as the Malayan Communist Party, the Malayan Democratic Union, the Anti-British League and the Pan-Malayan Women's Federation.

The surrender of the Japanese in 1945, intensified the activities of the Communists both in Malaya and Singapore. By 1954, the Communists had effectively infiltrated Chinese-language schools in Singapore. They exploited the "emotive issues of Chinese Education and Culture and penetrated not only the classrooms but also alumni and teachers' organisations" (Chua (48), p.31). Hundreds of Chinese-educated teachers and pupils, both males and females were actively involved in riots and demonstrations againgst the British administration. The Singapore Factory and Shopworkers' Union and the Singapore Bus Workers' Union were but two of several unions controlled by leaders with allegiance to the Malayan Communist Party. Hundreds of Chinese-educated female workers ranked among their supporters.

Major political parties of the 1940s and 1950s,

for example, the Labour Front, the Singapore People's Progressive Party, the Malayan Chinese Association, the United Malays National Organisation and the PAP, all had females among their members and supporters. The most prominent female political figure of the last two decades was Madam Chan Choy Siong. She was an active PAP member who played a leading role in the party in agitating for the rights of women. As branch treasurer of the Tanjong Pagar Branch of the PAP, she was instrumental in the setting up of a number of women's sections within the party. In early 1956, the Women's League was launched with a manifesto calling on Singapore women to rally under the party to fight for the emancipation of women from the bonds of feudal traditions, as well as for equal rights, including equal pay for equal work and, in particular, for an end to polygamy (49). The PAP's Central Executive Committee elaborated on these aims which were endorsed in the party's Five Year Plan 1959-1964, announced by the party chairman at a Special Party Congress on 25 April 1959 (49).

On 8 March 1956, soon after its formation, the Women's League held a mass rally attended by about two thousand men and women. It was held in conjunction with International Women's Day. In that year, the League outlined its major objectives in its work plan which were:

1. To set up an educational and cultural section to publicise the work of the Women's League and to educate the masses;
2. To start adult literacy classes for women in all branches; and,
3. To organise sessions where women could air

> their grievances and sufferings, to be followed by discussions to raise their political consciousness (Ong (49), p.53).

The work plan also aimed at the establishment of Women's sub-committees in all the branches under the direction of the Women's League. The objective was achieved by August 1956.

4.7 Conclusion

Historically, two thousand years ago, Chinese, Muslim and Indian women enjoyed higher status within society and were accorded the same degree of respect as men in the family, in religion and in public. However, as time went by, on account of socio-cultural, religious and political factors, the position of women of these religio-ethnic groups began to deteriorate so much that by the 19th century they had practically lost all their rights to equal educational opportunities, to selection of marriage partners and divorce, to ownership of personal property, to freedom of movement and were confined to the home in perpetual servitude to their husbands and the other male members in the extended family system.

The turn of the 20th century saw a gradual re-instatement of some of these rights as nationalism with its principles of democracy, equality and justice for all regardless of race, creed or sex, restored women back to a position of some importance in the home and in society. Absolute equality in all spheres of economic, educational,

religious, cultural and political fields is still far from their reach, but the foundation has been set. The extended family in which they had laboured and served as unpaid and often uncherished maids and slaves for generations, has since given way to the nuclear family in which they now devote their attention solely to their immediate spouses and children. In the West, the nuclear family has been criticised by some feminist writers, for example, Betty Friedan in The Feminine Mystique (50), as unliberating. In the East, this position has not yet been taken. On the whole the move from an extended to a nuclear family is seen as a hopeful one for the women's cause. It is, however, possible that disillusionment will set in at a later stage. Except in some cases, generally the Singapore girl can now look forward to at least six years of primary education, can openly seek employment which will enhance her economic independence, can have a say in her marriage arrangements and can in certain circumstances, initiate divorce.

Each of the three major ethnic groups of Singapore women has undergone generations of suppression and it was only in the last four decades that they had emerged from their seclusion. Constitutional and educational changes in particular, from 1959 onwards, have helped to raise their status and offered them better opportunities in preparation for their employment in the labour market. As more women joined the labour force, a large number also became trade union members while a few who were more assertive and

dedicated to enhancing the situations of their sisters in the labour market, took up the challenge as union office bearers. The dramatic changes which have taken place and their effects on women generally in the last quarter century, will be examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

CONSTITUTIONAL, POLITICAL AND EDUCATIONAL CHANGES FROM 1959 TO THE PRESENT DAY AND THE EFFECTS OF THESE CHANGES ON THE STATUS OF SINGAPORE WOMEN

5.1 Introduction

1959 heralded a new era for all Singaporeans when the British Government agreed to relinquish its control over the colony and hand over its administration to Singaporeans. With internal self-government in 1959, followed by independence in 1965, a fully-elected Singapore Government forged ahead with ambitious plans to improve the standard of life of its citizens while maintaining its unique multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-religious set-up.

To upgrade the skills of its future workforce to meet the fast changing and challenging world of science and technology, it was necessary to design new curricula geared to this ideal. The projected industrial programme of the late 1960s would not be able to function effectively if women were totally left out of the programme as they constituted almost half of the total population. Not only would their academic aptitudes have to be catered for through equal opportunities in the primary, secondary and tertiary stages but also an elevation in the status of women as wives and as workers would have to be attempted through constitutional means if women were to be enabled to achieve their full potential.

In the West, monogamy and the nuclear family are not always seen as liberating, however, in the East, monogamy represents a break-away from the extended family with all its familial ties and obligations which for centuries have placed the female sex in perpetual servitude to male members, upholding the dominant status of men within the home, in business, in politics, in religion and in society. Polygamy was not the prerogative of Chinese, Malay and Indian men only but, men of the other Asian societies as well. It was only in the 1950s that countries like China and India enforced monogamous marriage on their subjects (1). In 1961, Singapore joined her neighbours in reforming her marriage laws with the passing of the Women's Charter (2). Though romantic love is fast becoming the trend among the educated men and women in Asian societies today, parental approval is usually sought before a marriage takes place. Traditional and customary marriage rites are still practised among both the English-educated families of the three major racial groups in Singapore and the Chinese, Malay and Tamil-educated. Cohabitation before marriage is frowned upon and even though freedom of choice in marriage is both an ideal and a fact, in Singapore, for example, society still clings to its double standard (3). Wong (3) points out categorically that most men still insist on the chastity of their brides, though the days of the mother-in-law demanding proof of the brides' virginity are over.

Though the divorce rates in Singapore have been on the increase, for example, the number of applications for

1960 was 81 and for 1971 it was 314 (4), social stigma is still attached to the divorcee. According to a report in the Singapore Sunday Times of 4 March 1973, there were many more widowers and divorced men who remarried as compared to widows and divorcees who remarried.

In the last quarter century in particular, education in Singapore has made great strides. Free primary education for Singapore citizens, a place in school for every boy and girl, the rapid training of teachers to meet the acute shortage of teaching staff and changes in cultural and societal attitudes to the concept of education for girls, have led to increased female enrolment in primary and secondary schools. Female enrolment in tertiary institutions has been on the increase too.

Since the days of the Japanese occupation, females too have been involved in underground movements, working against Japanese aggression and oppression. They later diverted their energies to the struggle against British imperialism after the liberation (See Chapter 4, Section 4.6). In the 1950s, the PAP's Women's League concentrated its attention on freeing modern Singapore women from the bonds of traditional prejudices and discriminatory practices at home, in society and in employment. Later it was to play a crucial role in tipping the balance of power within the PAP organisation during the period of its internal struggle with the pro-Communist faction.

This chapter will thus focus on the legal, political and educational changes that took place in the last quarter century and the effects of these changes on the overall position and status of Singapore women, single or married, be they Chinese, Malay or Indian. Despite wide gains made in these fields, Singapore women remain poorly represented, for instance, at the top levels of politics, in the higher echelons of the education system, among the judiciary and in the financial and commercial world. Amidst the PAP rhetoric of establishing an egalitarian society, one cannot fail to note that there are still many male domains in both the public and private sectors which appear to be beyond the reach of women.

5.2 Changes in the legal status of Singapore women in the last quarter century

Singapore women had for generations been the target of unfair treatment, extreme discrimination and subjection to their fathers, husbands and sons. They were denied rights to equal share in inheritance as daughters, to enter into contracts or manage their own businesses. Neither could they buy, sell and transfer property without the consent of their fathers or husbands. Freedom of choice in the selection of life partners was a privilege which only a few from liberal Western-educated families began to enjoy in the last three or four decades. Girls were brought up primarily for one purpose, that is, to be married off once they reached the age of puberty. And once married, they

were confined to the home as wives and mothers.

Polygamy was rife in Singapore among the Chinese, Malay and Indians prior to 1961. While Islam limits a Muslim to having four wives at one time, there was no such religious commandment for Chinese and Indians to adhere to. It was not uncommon for the very wealthy Chinese and Hindu merchants to have one principal wife and several secondary wives at the same time. Under British colonial law, a secondary wife could sue for maintenance for herself and for her children in the same way as a first wife whether or not she had undergone a marriage ceremony. The legal status was established if it could be proved that the couple intended the union to be a marriage as Wee (5) and Wee (6) assert. Thus, in the case of a man with a principal wife and four secondary wives, the latter could all apply for letters of administration on the basis of equality with the first wife and could claim half of the widow's share on the intestacy of the husband: that half share would then be divided into four equal parts (6). However, Freedman (7) points out that whereas in the traditional society of the Chinese homeland, for example, the principal and secondary wives could have claimed adequate maintenance only, British colonial law, with the expressed object of respecting custom in recognising polygamy, gave to secondary wives rights to ownership in property.

However, the law in Singapore, prior to 1961, gave no protection to secondary wives in cases of divorce.

The secondary wife, as Wee (6) points out, could be repudiated at the will of the husband. Meanwhile, the legal authorities were often divided in their decision as to whether a principal wife could be divorced at all, except for grave misdemeanours (6). In practice, however, as Wee (6) further asserts, where documents of separation were mutually drawn up with freedom to remarry, these had been officially accepted in Chinese society as amounting to divorce. Singaporean Chinese, who had been married by Chinese custom but were able to produce such documents, were accepted by the Registrar of Marriages as capable of contracting a civil marriage.

As early as 1929, in China under the Nationalist Government's code of law, polygamy had ceased to be legal. However, it was never vigorously enforced until 1950. It was the Communist People's Republic which strictly prohibited polygamy and enforced monogamy under its marriage code of 1950. In 1955, the Indian Hindu Marriage Law established monogamous marriage for all Hindus in India.

The reforms in the marriage laws of these two countries from which the two major immigrant communities of Singapore were drawn, could not be ignored by the Singapore authorities. To continue to permit polygamy with its inherent cultural complexities would have, in a sense, "fossilised their customs at a point now obsolete in their respective homelands" (Wee (6), p.405). Changes in marriage laws would eradicate problems faced by the Colonial

Government in matters of divorce, maintenance and particularly in inheritance as numerous litigations over estates of rich Chinese men who had died intestate were brought to the courts (5). Promises of marriage reforms were contained in the PAP's 1959 election manifesto. In keeping with its election pledges, the PAP which won the general elections on 30 May 1959, drew up the Women's Charter in 1961. It was passed by the Legislative Assembly and came into force on 15 September 1961. Twenty years later most people, both men and women are aware of the provisions of the Women's Charter and abide by them. The process of public education has taken place in an informal way; through the newspapers and through personal experience. Until recently it was not taught in secondary schools as part of Civics lessons; two years ago junior colleges began classes in Marriage and the Family which incorporate the terms of the Women's Charter.

The dramatic changes in the legal status of women enacted by the Charter and its Amendments in 1967, apply to all ethnic groups of Singapore women, except Muslim women, in the sections relating to marriage and divorce. With due respect to the sharp contrast in the religious tenets and practices of Islam as regards these two sensitive issues, Muslim women are subject to the Muslim Ordinance of 1957 (8), the Muslim (Amendment) Ordinance of 1960 (9) and the Administration of Muslim Law Act of 1966 (10).

The first clauses of the Women's Charter under the

heading Part II, Monogamous Marriages, aims at giving Singaporeans "far-reaching stability in marriage" (Singapore Legislative Assembly Debate (11), p.443). These clauses, namely Section 4, clauses 1 and 2, Section 5, clauses 1 and 2 and Sections 6 and 7 together with Part III, Section 21, clauses 1 and 3, safeguard the rights of women with regard to marriage by enforcing monogamy and the solemnization and registration of such marriages (See Appendix 5.A).

The Charter provides that from 2 March 1961, monogamy will be the only form of marriage permitted in Singapore whether the rite performed was civil, customary or Christian. No married man can contract marriage with another woman unless his previous marriage was brought to an end by divorce or by the demise of his wife. However, polygamous marriages in existence prior to 2 March 1961, remain valid and the legitimacy of children of such unions is recognised.

Before the enactment of the Charter, only Christian and Civil marriages were registered. Civil marriages came into force in 1941. Under the Charter, customary marriages must be reported to the Registrar and a record of such marriages kept. Failure to comply with the new regulations carried a fine of 1,000 Singapore dollars plus one year's imprisonment.

The Charter clearly states that all married women have the right to engage in any trade or profession or in

social activities and the right to use their own name and surname under Part VI, Section 45, clauses 2 and 3, as well as the right to acquire, hold and dispose of any property under Part VI, Section 47a (See Appendix 5.A). No longer do adult women need to seek the consent of fathers and husbands on such matters as contraception, abortion and sterilisation. The Singapore Family Planning and Population Board (SFPPB) which was established in 1965, provides a comprehensive family planning service at the 24 full-time and 5 part-time Maternity and Child Health Centres, spread throughout the island. Consultations at these centres are free and accessible to all classes and to all Singaporeans, men and women alike. Since 1974, legislation has made it possible for any pregnant woman regardless of age or status to have an abortion provided that she is a Singapore citizen, the wife of a Singapore citizen or has been a Singapore resident for at least four months (12). Termination of a pregnancy at more than twenty-four weeks, however, is not permissable, except in cases of emergency to save the woman's life or to prevent grave or permanent injury to her physical or mental health. The fees are set out by government regulations and are as low as five Singapore dollars for an abortion.

Provision is also made for the maintenance of married women and their children as outlined in Part VII, Section 60, clauses 1 and 2 (See Appendix 5.A). The Charter which also covers offences against women and girls, protects women and children too, against threats and violence by

their husbands and fathers respectively.

Where generations of Chinese and Hindu women in the traditional family systems were denied the right to terminate their marriage even though they had suffered both mental and physical abuse, the Charter offers the unhappy spouse a new lease of life by allowing her to initiate divorce on various grounds, three years after the solemnization of the marriage. Prior to the Charter, parties who had contracted Civil or Christian marriages could seek remedy by means of divorce in the High Court which had jurisdiction over such forms of marriages. No Singapore court then had any jurisdiction in divorce matters for those married by customary rites. Thus, although mutual consent separations were common among those Chinese who contracted customary rites and the Colonial Government gave them "the stamp of its approval" (Wee (6), p.406), such divorces had no legal standing. Promises of maintenance to sustain the wife and children after the separation, were often broken and the woman could not sue for breach of maintenance. The Charter, therefore, not only emphasises the granting of maintenance to wife and children but also the adherence to maintenance orders handed down by the High Court.

To discourage teenagers from early marriages, the Women's Charter has decreed that the legal minimum age for marriage for both sexes is eighteen but at this age, the parties involved must have the consent of either parents or

guardians (13). The minimum age stipulation also acts as a form of protection for teenagers especially those belonging to certain ethnic groups whose parents may force them into marriage even before they reach the age of puberty, since it is a common practice among their race. The consent of parents or guardians need not be sought when both parties are twenty-one and above.

The 1967 Amendment Act passed by the Legislative Assembly, sealed a loophole in the 1961 Women's Charter. This latter Act makes it a punishable offence for all non-Muslims (14) who undergo any form of marriage be it traditional or religious, without first registering the marriage and obtaining a certificate of marriage from the state Registrar of Marriages. This has resulted from cases where both parties to a marriage had first undergone the customary or religious marriage ceremony of their race and creed then not registering the marriage with the state Civil Marriage Registry. In the eyes of the law after 1961, such marriages are not recognised but many, either through ignorance,neglect or flagrant defiance of the law, disobeyed the ruling much to their detriment when relationships soured and divorce proceedings were instituted.

The high instability of Muslim marriages whereby the proportion of divorces to marriages was almost 50 per cent, led the government to introduce the Muslim Ordinance of 1957. Reports from the Singapore Shariah Court and Muslim Marriages show that, for 1958 alone, there were 1,149

divorces to 2,332 marriages (15). This 1957 Act was not an attempt to introduce new legislation which would upset the basic Muslim laws relating to marriage and divorce but was passed by the Legislative Assembly so that the number of divorces might be reduced and that the laws of Islam might be enforced more effectively (3). Wong (3) points out that the high rate of divorce was due to several factors; primary among them were: early marriages between teenagers still too immature and inexperienced to shoulder responsibilities of marriage; disparity in ages of the couples; forced marriages; the ease with which Muslim men are privileged to unilateral divorce by uttering the 'three talaks' and registering the divorce with a kathi (16) without having to offer any reasons for initiating the divorce, and the absence of an official guidance and counselling body to which troubled couples could turn for assistance.

With the passing of the 1957 Ordinance, the Shariah Court was established the following year. It saw to the administration of Muslim law relating to marriage and divorce. Muslims who wish to seek divorce are required to register the case with the court which will only grant divorce after futile attempts at reconciliation of the parties concerned. Since the Qur'an requires the women seeking divorce under certain circumstances, as discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2, to return the dowry given to them at the time of marriage, this and other conditions such as

the payment of maintenance and consolatory gifts, the division of property and the custody of children, come under the purview of the Shariah Court. The power of the Shariah Court was increased with the Muslim (Amendment) Ordinance of 1960. The Administration of the Muslim Act of 1966, passed by parliament in that year, repealed the 1957 Muslim Ordinance. It saw to the establishment of a separate Muslim Registry of Marriages with its own Registrar and the appointment of Naib Kathis or Deputy Registrars of Marriages in various districts of Singapore. The Registrar is empowered under the Act to make full enquiry into the legality or otherwise, of every marriage under both Muslim law and the 1966 Act (17). The Act also stipulates the minimum age of sixteen years before solemnization may take place.

5.3 Singapore women's involvement in the political and trade union movements and women's organisations from 1959 to the present day

The success of the PAP in the 1959 general elections was made possible through the active support and dedication of members of its Women's League. The League rallied women members and supporters to campaign for the party and they were particularly effective in house to house canvassing, in the distribution of party leaflets, in cooking meals for party workers and in providing speakers at rallies (18). These women's contributions to the success of the PAP in the 1959 and successive general elections drew

praise from the Minister for Labour in his article in the PAP 1954-1979 commemorative document published by the Central Executive Committee of the party in 1979 (19).

The Women's League was also instrumental in tipping the balance of power within the PAP's leadership. The PAP was founded on 21 November 1954, but in the early years of its existence, the party's Central Executive Committee (CEC) and membership were made up of pro-communists and non-communists. Several attempts were made by the comunists to gain control of the party's CEC and the Singapore Trades Union Congress (20), on which the PAP had relied heavily for support. From 1954 to 1961 when the struggle for control of the party leadership was at stake, non-communist Madam Chan Choy Siong and the Women's League under her direction stood firmly by the non-communist faction headed by Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, Dr. Toh Chin Chye and Dr. Goh Keng Swee, three of the founder members of the PAP.

While many other outstanding feminists, for example, Annie Besant and Sarojini Naidu, belonged to middle class families, were English-educated and inspired by Western ideas, Madam Chan was from working class stock and Chinese-educated. Except for a handful of middle and upper class women, the bulk of the women who lent their support to the PAP and the other political parties belonged to the working class. Unlike working class women who had freer access to movement and socialisation with their male colleagues while seeking their economic autonomy, upper and

middle class women did not need to fend for themselves. Their contact with the outside world was thus more limited and less frequent.

In keeping with their 1959 election pledge to raise the status of women, the PAP fielded four women candidates, Madam Chan being one of them. She was selected by the CEC for the subsequent general elections in 1963 and 1968 but in July 1970 she decided to give up her seat to make way for another PAP candidate. This was in line with the party's reorganisation scheme. However, the general elections of 1972, 1976 and 1980 saw the absence of women PAP candidates. It was only in the December 1984 elections that the ruling party again decided to field three prominent female candidates: one a university lecturer, one a medical practitioner and the third, an active trade unionist and Chairman of the NTUC Central Committee. They were all successfully returned in their constituencies. While none of the elected PAP women members of parliament from 1959 to 1970 held any responsible posts, neither it seems are the recently elected women being groomed for future ministerial posts. The PAP's CEC in the last three decades too, has been an all-male affair.

While women's direct political participation has been on the wane in the last decade in the trade union movement, women's membership has been on the rise from 1964 to 1984. As shown on Table 5.A, women's total membership in trade unions grew from 17,329 in 1964 to 73,302 in 1984.

TABLE 5.A

FEMALE MEMBERSHIP IN TRADE UNIONS, 1964-1984

YEAR	Total No. of Unionised Workers	Total Females	Female % of Total
1964	101,824	17,329	17.0
1974	189,214	65,894	34.8
1984	192,394	73,302	38.1

(Source: MOL, Singapore. 1964-84)

The increase in female membership from 17,329 in 1964 to 65,894 in 1974 represent a percentage increase of 280.3%. This is a reflection of the vast increase in female employment in industry particularly with the swing to industrialisation in the late 1960s (See Chapter 6, Section 6.3.2). Another factor which contributed to the rise in female membership since 1973, was the intensive drive by the NTUC to organise women previously excluded from unions because of the high turnover of women in the textile industry (21). An example of the high percentage of female membership strength in the six largest unions affiliated to the NTUC in 1984, is shown on Table 5.B below:

TABLE 5.B

MEMBERSHIP STRENGTH OF 6 OF THE LARGEST UNIONS

AFFILIATED TO THE NTUC AS ON 31 OCTOBER 1984

Name of Union	Total No.	Male No.	Female No.	Female % of Total
(1) AUPE	20,305	10,069	10,236	50.4
(2) UWEEI	18,369	4,468	13,901	75.7
(3) SMMWU	12,749	7,153	5,596	43.9
(4) FDAWU	10,351	5,125	5,226	50.5
(5) NTWU	8,729	7,846	883	10.1
(6) STU	7,893	2,648	5,245	66.5
TOTAL	78,396	37,309	41,087	52.4

(Source: NTUC, Singapore. 1984)

KEY

(1) AUPE = Amalgamated Union of Public Empolyees
(2) UWEEI= United Workers of Electronic & Electrical Industries
(3) SMMWU= Singapore Manual & Merchantile Workers' Union
(4) FDAWU= Food, Drinks & Allied Workers' Union
(5) NTWU = National Transport Workers' Union
(6) STU = Singapore Teachers' Union

The 1970s also saw women coming up in the unions, taking on active and important roles as leaders at union headquarters and at branch levels (See Table 5.C) and as industrial relations officers (See Table 5.D). In the Singapore Industrial Labour Organisation (SILO) which is an amalgamation of all unionised members of the electronics and textile industries, for example, it is not unusual to come across whole union branches controlled and administered by women (21).

The first woman to win a seat on the Central Committee of the NTUC in 1973, was Anabella Sim, a trainer

in a manufacturing firm (21). Anabella Sim, Lim Kim Choo, the national secretary of the Amalgamated Union of Public Employees (AUPE) and Mrs. Yu-Foo Yee Shoon, who made local union history by being elected chairman of the NTUC Central Committee in 1980, had participated in negotiations for better work conditions and higher wages for both the male and female colleagues they represented. With women playing an increasingly significant role in mediation and in the negotiation of collective agreements, it should be noted that their involvement in these spheres are not entirely without political implications (22).

TABLE 5.C

FEMALE OFFICIALS IN THE SIX LARGEST UNIONS

AFFILIATED TO THE NTUC IN 1983

Name of Union	Total No. of Ex-Co* Members	Female Ex-Co Members	Female % of Total	Total No. Branch Officials	Female Branch Officials	Female % of Total
AUPE	49	6	12.2	990	298	30.1
UWEEI	17	2	11.8	672	250	37.2
SMMWU	23	3	13.0	1,400	450	32.1
FDAWU	29	6	20.7	535	136	25.4
NTWU	22	1	4.5	234	4	1.7
STU	25	12	48.0	N.A+	N.A	-
TOTAL	165	30	18.2	3,831	1,138	29.7

(Source: NTUC, Singapore. 1984)

KEY

* Ex-Co = Executive Committee members
+ N.A. = Not Applicable

TABLE 5.D

FULL-TIME INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS OFFICERS IN 1983

Name of Union	Total No.	Male No.	Female No.	Female % of Total
AUPE	7	5	2	28.6
UWEEI	7	4	3	42.9
SMMWU	9	7	2	22.2
FDAWU	3	2	1	33.3
NTWU	4	4	0	0.0
STU	1	1	0	0.0
TOTAL	31	23	8	25.8

(Source: NTUC, Singapore. 1984)

While Table 5.B shows, for example, four of the unions affiliated to the NTUC namely, AUPE, UWEEI, FDAWU and STU having higher female than male numbers and percentages, Table 5.C reveals the comparative low numbers and percentages of female officials in decision-making levels. In the STU, a large proportion (48%) of Executive Committee members are women. The reason for this is difficult to establish but it may be due to the fact that, unlike other unions, the STU has no branch committees on which women in the other unions play a relatively larger part than on the Central Executive Committee. The other five large unions were controlled by males with over 80% of males as Executive Committee members and over 70% of males as branch officials in each case. Unless the numbers of females in the top hierarchy of these and other unions increase, it is likely that the disadvantages that female workers experience in the Singapore labour market, as discussed in Chapter 6, will continue to persist.

As noted earlier, although middle and upper class women are visibly absent from the political arena, they have not abandoned their rights to defend their professional interests and privileges. They have mobilised themselves into such semi-political organisations as women's associations dedicated to advancing the needs of women (22). Prominent among these associations are, for example, Singapore Association of Women Lawyers, Singapore Business and Professional Women's Association and Young Women's Christian Association which together with 20 other women's organisations come under the umbrella body of the Singapore Council of Women's Organisations (SCWO) with a total membership of 92,000 women (See Appendix 5.B).

5.4 Changes in the educational status of Singapore women

Education, as Byrne (23) points out, has long been one of the most decisive of our life chances, the key to equal opportunity and the ladder to advancement in industrialised societies. Since time immemorial, the Chinese, for example, have had great respect for learning. As early as two thousand years ago, the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. to 220 A.D.) had stressed the importance of learning and emphasised the academic excellence of its government officials who were primarily selected through the tough Imperial Examination System. The system was continued through successive dynasties in spite of recurring invasions and rebellions. Even the Mongolians and the Manchurians, each of whom conquered and ruled China, the Mongolians for a

total of 89 years (1279 A.D.-1368 A.D.) and the Manchurians for a total of 267 years (1644 A.D.-1911 A.D.), adopted the system in their selection of officials to help rule the country. Success in these examinations not only brought nation-wide respect and rise in social status for the incumbents, it also meant power and the control of the masses. The successful scholar had the right to an immediate audience with the district magistrate and was exempt from any physical punishment (24). Without education and denied the opportunity of acquiring skills and qualifications most men and women in industrialised societies are condemned to the status of second class citizens.

As documented in Chapter 3, Sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2, the foundation in education was laid by the various religious and ethnic organisations with minimal support from the Colonial Government in the early years of the 19th century. However, the diverse and decentralised educational system from 1819 to 1958, resulted in the development of four distinct educational groups namely, the English-educated, the Chinese-educated, the Malay-educated and the Tamil-educated with the latter three groups turning to their respective homelands for philosophical and cultural guidance and moral support. It was up to a self-governing Singapore to find a means of integrating the four groups and to instil in the new Singaporean, a sense of national loyalty to the newly-created state. In its May

1959 election manifesto, the PAP pointed out,

> Singapore does not have a stable integrated society, nor has it inherited any traditions. So we hear many discordant voices and the divergence of beliefs and customs are probably greater in our plural society than among any other population of equal size.
>
> (Petir (25), p.5)

As Gopinathan (26) points out, it is upon education that the greatest hopes have been placed by the PAP for the emergence of the new Singaporean. The recommendations of the All-Party Committee of 1955 (See Chapter 3, Section 3.2.2) were adopted and the task of the PAP was to "translate the aim of equality of opportunity for all language streams into reality" (Tan (27), p.109).

The present government's initiative in legislating for equal educational opportunities for both boys and girls naturally led to increased enrolment in schools. Six years of free primary education was enough of an incentive for most Singapore parents to allow their children, especially girls, to attend school. During the period 1960 to 1984, female enrolment in Singapore schools increased progressively. Table 5.E shows the total female enrolment in Singapore schools during the period 1960 to 1984 while Table 5.F shows the female enrolment figures in primary and secondary schools from 1960 to 1984. These particular years represented on the tables have been chosen for specific reasons. The year 1960 marked the beginning of self-governing Singapore; the year 1967 was the year before 'take off' into industrialisation; the year 1973 marked the time

when the industrialisation programme was implemented; 1979 marked the inception of the advanced technology programme in industry and 1984 follows on the implementation of the recommendations of the Goh Report.

TABLE 5.E

FEMALE ENROLMENT IN SINGAPORE SCHOOLS, 1960-1984

Year	Total No.	Female No.	Female % of Total
1960	347,882	150,037	43.1
1967	493,351	232,383	47.1
1973	501,724	244,574	48.7
1979	479,393	233,836	48.8
1984	474,339	229,278	48.3

(Source: Statistical Yearbooks 1961, 1969, 1974 and 1983 and MOE, Singapore. 1984)

TABLE 5.F

FEMALE ENROLMENT IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS, 1960-1984

YEAR	PRIMARY			SECONDARY		
	Total No.	Female No.	Female % of Total	Total No.	Female No.	Female % of Total
1960	289,172	127,498	44.1	58,710	22,539	38.4
1967	368,650	170,823	46.3	124,701	61,560	49.4
1973	345,284	162,728	47.1	156,440	81,846	52.3
1979	290,859	138,885	47.7	188,534	94,951	50.4
1984	288,494	135,502	47.0	185,845	93,776	50.5

(Source: Statistical Yearbooks 1961, 1969, 1974, and 1983, and MOE, Singapore. 1984)

The award of bursaries to deserving pupils in the secondary and tertiary stages on grounds of merit and financial difficulties, regardless of race, sex or creed,

further enhanced higher educational opportunities for bright female students (28). As Table 5.G below reveals, an impressive result of the emphasis on equal educational opportunities for women was the distinct increase of 266.0% in the total percentage of female enrolment in the University of Singapore between the years 1961 and 1971. The increase is widespread covering all faculties. In the late 1960s, when courses such as Business Administration, Accountancy, Architecture, Building and Estate Management and Engineering were begun, female students began to make their presence felt. By 1971, out of a total enrolment of 1,900 in these five courses, 401 or 21.1% were female students, an indication of increasing female participation in courses commonly regarded as exclusively 'male' areas.

TABLE 5.G

FEMALE ENROLMENT BY COURSE OF STUDY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE, 1961 AND 1971

Course of Study	1961 Total No.	1961 Female No.	1961 Female % of Total	1971 Total No.	1971 Female No.	1971 Female % of Total
Arts & Social Sciences	359	151	42.1	734	513	69.9
Education	63	39	61.9	-	-	-
Science	275	54	19.6	629	303	48.2
Law	295	52	17.6	356	152	42.7
Medicine	561	84	15.0	583	152	26.1
Dentistry	128	23	18.0	150	44	29.3
Pharmacy	82	32	39.0	54	27	50.0
Business Administration	-	-	-	359	91	25.3
Accountancy	-	-	-	463	239	51.6
Architecture	-	-	-	143	28	19.6
Building & Estate Management	-	-	-	142	12	8.5
Engineering	-	-	-	793	31	3.9
TOTAL	1,763	435	24.7	4,406	1,592	36.1

(Source: University of Singapore, Singapore. 1961 and 1971)

Table 5.H which covers the periods 1979 and 1984 shows even greater increase in the total enrolment of female undergraduates in the university as well as in the 5 new departments mentioned above. Of a total of 6,861 undergraduates registered for degree and diploma courses in the 1979/80 academic year, 3,026 or 44.1% are females. As for the five new courses, out of a total enrolment of 3,156, 955 or 30.3% are females, an increase of 138.2% over the 1971 figures was seen (29).

The 1983/84 figures show even greater female

enrolment in the university. Their numbers had swollen to 6,596 or 55.2% of the total enrolment. An increase in number is also seen in the 5 courses which had a total female enrolment of 2,376 or 19.9% out of the total enrolment of 11,939 (30). In 1961, female enrolment in all faculties was 435. From 1961 to 1983, the increase in the number of female students was 6,161. This represents a percentage increase of 1,416.3%. An increase of 1,975 in the number of students enrolled in the 5 faculties was evident from 1971 to 1983, representing a percentage increase of 492.5%.

TABLE 5.H

FEMALE ENROLMENT BY COURSE OF STUDY IN THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE, 1979/80 AND 1983/84 SESSIONS

Course of Study	1979/80 Total No.	1979/80 Female No.	1979/80 Female % of Total	1983/84 Total No.	1983/84 Female No.	1983/84 Female % of Total
Arts & Social Sciences	1,408	925	65.7	2,722	2,061	75.7
Science	973	573	58.9	2,232	1,446	64.8
Law	354	197	55.6	596	320	53.7
Medicine	671	261	38.9	896	279	31.1
Dentistry	141	66	46.8	155	68	43.9
Pharmacy	50	25	50.0	69	46	66.7
Business Administration	666	294	44.1	1,367	911	66.6
Accountancy	602	341	56.6	1,157	909	78.6
Architecture	265	83	31.3	392	129	32.9
Building & Est. Management	246	107	43.5	461	218	47.3
Engineering	1,377	130	9.4	1,787	186	10.4
Chem.Engineering	108	24	22.2	105	23	21.9
TOTAL	6,861	3,026	44.1	11,939	6,596	55.2

(Source: NUS, Singapore. 1980 and MOC, Singapore. 1985)

Female enrolment in the technical colleges namely the Polytechnic and Ngee Ann Technological Colleges have not been as encouraging as at the university. Male enrolment was more than 75% of the total enrolment as the two periods 1976/77 and 1983/84 academic years show in Table 5.I below. An increase of only 2,179 female students and a percentage increase of 106.4% was seen in the 7-year span. Females have yet to take on courses like Mechanical, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Shipbuilding and Repair Technology, Naval Architecture and Ship Construction, for example, which these institutions offer.

TABLE 5.I

FEMALE ENROLMENT IN THE TECHNICAL COLLEGES IN THE 1976/77 AND 1983/84 SESSIONS

Year	Total No.	Female No.	Female % of Total
1976/77	10,022	2,048	20.4
1983/84	17,104	4,227	24.7

(Source: MOC, Singapore. 1977 and 1985)

The comparatively small number of female students in the technical colleges reflect not only the traditional Asian attitude to male-oriented courses which females tend to shun having been indoctrinated from a young age by parents and schools that such courses are unfit for them, but in particular, the lack of preparation to take up such courses. The introduction of Technical Education for all schools in Singapore in 1969, as pointed out in Chapter 3,

Section 3.6.1, favoured boys since it became compulsory for them to have at least two years of Technical Education in secondary schools. Only 50% of the same cohort of girls were given the privilege.

To be selected for engineering courses in these intsitutions entails credit passes for GCE 'O' level students in subjects like Elementary Mathematics and an appropriate Science/Technical subject and a pass in English Language and for GCE 'A' level students, passes in Mathematics and Physical Science or an appropriate science subject and at least a P7 grade in English Language at the GCE 'O' level or a pass in General Paper in the English medium at the GCE 'A' level (31). Although the number of female students who sat for the GCE 'O' level Elementary Mathematics in 1974, 1979 and 1983 was slightly more than the number of boy students, only 33.3% of girl candidates in 1974 and 32.1% of girl candidates in 1983 of the total number of candidates, sat for Physics. The figures for Chemistry for girls for 1974 and 1983 are 40.8% and 37.3% of the total number of candidates respectively. As for Physical Science, for the years 1974, 1979 and 1983, girls' percentages of the total number of candidates were 37.5%, 38% and 36.5% respectively. For Metalwork, in the three years selected, the percentages were below 30% of the total number of candidates for girls. Except for 1979 when the percentage of girl candidates was 25.4% of the total number of candidates, for the remaining two periods, their percentages were below 20% (See Table 7.Q). The same

pattern was also evident in the 'A' level science subjects. In all the three 'hard science' subjects like Physics, Chemistry and Physical Science, boy percentages of the total number of candidates were over 60% in the two periods 1979 and 1983. It was only in the 1979 examination that the percentage of girl candidates of the total number who sat for Physical Science was over 45% (See Table 7.R).

The above figures of the subject choices of Singapore school candidates in the GCE 'O' Level Examinations for the years 1974, 1979 and 1983 and the GCE 'A' Level Examinations for the years 1979 and 1983, confirm the disadvantaged position of female students seeking admission to science-oriented courses in the university and in particular to technical colleges, thus resulting in the generally small rise in the number of female students in these latter institutions in the period 1976 to 1983.

5.5 Changes in the social status of Singapore women in the last quarter century

The emphasis on industrialisation from the late 1960s onwards with the influx of multinational corporations and the advent of advanced technology, has led to the creation of a technocratic elite and the formation of a group of middle-level bureaucrats and technicians. In a republic like Singapore where social democracy is the hallmark, there is the absence of a hierarchical class system based on lineage, blue blood or landed property.

Instead class and status can be measured in terms of academic ahievement, businesses and occupations held and wages earned. On the worker's level, the growth of skilled workers and a mass of workers employed as cheap labour in the labour-intensive industries is evident (32). Senior civil servants and professionals, namely economists and social scientists, fall into this new industrial bureaucracy while other university, polytechnic and college graduates as Hezner (32) points out, form the middle-level bureaucrats and technicians. Production workers increasingly employed by industrial firms, for example, fall into the third category. They comprise those who lack the necessary educational qualifications to fit into higher positions in the occupational strata.

Data which show the breakdown of Singapore workers into these categories are unavailable, however, a guide to the number who fall into each category can be measured through the gross monthly wages earned. Production and related workers with primary or no education earn less than 1,000 Singapore dollars per month, while the gross monthly incomes of the top class of technocrats normally go beyond 3,000 dollars per month. The salaries of middle-level bureaucrats and technicians range between 1,000 and 3,000 dollars per month. Table 5.J, therefore, gives the total figures of males and females and their gross monthly incomes during the periods 1974 and 1984. Between 1972 and 1979, average nominal weekly earnings for all industries increased

by 10 per cent a year. However, with inflation rising by 8 per cent annually, the average real earnings rose by only 2 per cent per year in the 1970s.

TABLE 5.J

EMPLOYED PERSONS BY GROSS MONTHLY INCOME, 1974 AND 1984
(Exclude unpaid family workers)

Gross Monthly Income	1974 Total No.	1974 Female No.	1974 Female % of Total	1984 Total No.	1984 Female No.	1984 Female % of Total
Total	824,349	262,156	31.8	1,151,157	410,738	35.7
Under $1,000	788,021	258,903	32.9	861,572	344,666	40.0
$1,000 to $2,999	36,327	3,253	9.0	240,288	60,926	25.4
$3,000 and over	.....	.....	....	49,297	5,146	10.4

(Source: Reports on the Labour Force Survey of Singapore, 1974 and 1984)

In 1984, the total population of Singapore stood at 2,529,099 (33). Figures from Table 5.J show that only 5,146 employed females earn a gross monthly wage of $3,000 and over, thus placing them in the category of the elite class of the technocrats. Although this figure is a vast improvement from 1977 in which only 259 earn this sum (34), they represent 0.2% of the total population. The heaviest concentration of employed females is in the lowest category, earning less than $1,000 per month. However, in the period 1974 to 1984, the number of females who fall into the middle category have increased substantially from 3,253 to 60,926. This represents an increase of 57,673 in number and an increase of 1,772.9% in percentage.

Although most Chinese, Malay and Indian parents since 1960 no longer forbid their daughters to receive an education, not every girl is given the opportunity to proceed to secondary and tertiary levels. Only primary education is free for all male and female pupils so when parents who have several children have to make a choice as to who should receive the best education, in nine out of ten cases, boys are the ultimate choice. This was the consensus of opinion of the eleven people whom the author interviewed in September 1984 (35).

Table 5.K below shows the breakdown of the educational qualifications of females of the total population of 10 years and over in 1974 and 15 years and over in 1984.

TABLE 5.K

FEMALES BY HIGHEST QUALIFICATION ATTAINED, 1974 AND 1984

Highest Qualification Attained	1974(Ten years & over) Total No.	Female No.	Female % of Total	1984(15 years & over) Total No.	Female No.	Female % of Total
Total	1,768,606	881,268	49.8	1,903,967	957,798	50.3
Never attended school	879,277	493,327	56.1	323,794	231,458	71.5
Primary (PSLE & below)	505,080	218,156	43.2	838,395	379,081	45.2
Post Primary	59,493	24,768	41.6	5,352	782	14.6
Secondary	230,540	110,098	47.8	498,896	246,854	49.5
Post Secondary	69,594	27,925	40.1	164,192	73,750	44.9
Tertiary	22,825	6,314	27.7	67,204	23,506	35.0
Qualification not elsewhere classifiable	1,797	680	37.8	6,134	2,367	38.6

(Source: Reports on the Labour Force Survey of Singapore, 1974 and 1984)

Although numerically and in percentage more females have attained higher academic qualifications in the ten-year span, in 1984, 71.5% of females fifteen years and above out of the total number of 323,794 have never attended school despite the availability of equal educational opportunities since 1959. An increase of 17,192 females with tertiary qualification was evident from 1974 to 1984. This is an encouraging sign but the total number of females with tertiary qualification, that is, 23,506 in 1984, represents only 0.9% of the total population of 2,529,099 and 1.2% of the total population of 1,903,967 fifteen years and above. Meanwhile, the number of males with tertiary qualification during the same period increased by 27,187. The total number of males, that is, 43,698 with tertiary qualification in 1984 represents 1.7% of the total Singapore population, almost double that of the total number of females with the same academic qualification.

The figures in Table 5.K, therefore, contribute to a better understanding of the types of jobs and the positions within the organisations that females end up when they enter the labour market. Although it could be said that the position of girls in the labour market today is improving because of enhanced educational provision, nevertheless the number of women in the total population who have not had the advantage of adequate schooling in the past, makes the overall picture of women's opportunities in employment not an encouraging one. Without relevant academic qualifications, skills and training available

especially to females in the initial stages of the industrial programme in the late 1960s and through the early years of the 1970s, the majority of females who have post primary, primary or no qualification (83.5% of the total number of females in 1974 and 63.8% of the total number of females in 1984 were without secondary educational qualifications) ultimately fall into the lowest rungs of the ocupational strata, thus, automatically relegating them to low societal status.

In the employment structure of Singapore today, the age of retirement for men and women is the same: 60 years of age. In the past it was 45 for women and 50 for men. In the period 1971-75, the crude death rate per thousand was 5.3 For the period 1976-79, it was 5.2 per thousand. In the 1970s, life expectancy at birth was 65.1 years for males and 70.0 years for females. The trend is expected to improve to 72.6 years for males by 2030 and 75.2 years for females by 2020 (36).

Within the home, however, in the case of the better-educated working women, they do enjoy a better status. The vigorous campaigns of the SFPPB in its two Five-Year National Family Planning Programmes between 1966-70 and 1971-75, had resulted in the fall of of the crude birth rate from 29.9 per thousand populaton in 1965 to around 20 per thousand by 1970 (37). By 1975, the crude birth rate had fallen further to 17.8 per thousand and at the same time, the total fertility rate dropped to 2.1

children and the reproduction rate reached 1.0 (38). These figures suggest that women wished to avoid numerous pregnancies and thus exercise autonomy in controlling their fertility.

The 1972 ECAFE Husband-Wife Communication and Family Planning Study carried out by Chen (39), revealed that those who had practised family planning had a higher percentage (47.7 per cent) of joint decision-making by husbands and wives compared to those who had not practised family planning (33.9 per cent). Family planning not only reduced the burden of child care at home but also enhances the degree of egalitarianism in the husband and wife relationship with a higher degree of joint decision-making. Besides a higher degree of husband-wife communication in matters relating to the education of their children, status mobility, religion and recreation, joint discussion and decision-making in other matters was also evident among those who had practised family planning. In families both educated and uneducated that practised family planning, the wives generally had a greater degree of personal freedom in such areas as seeking outside employment or interacting with members of the opposite sex (37). This confirms Firestone's views in The Dialectic of Sex (40) that contraception is liberating. Indirectly then, these benefits contribute to a rise in women's status in society.

5.6 Effects of the above changes on the status of Singapore women in general

As documented above, legal, political and educational changes which had taken place in the last quarter century in particular, had significant and far-reaching effects on the status of Singapore women in in general. The Women's Charter had freed married women from the bonds of intolerable relationships by granting them the right to legal divorce and to equitable maintenance from their spouses, for themselves and for their children, should they gain custody of them. The innocent and ignorant adolescent below the age of eighteen is protected from forced marriage while married women enjoy the rights and privileges of single women by being allowed to use their own names and surnames after marriage, to own property, to manage their own businesses and to self-determination in matters relating to abortion, contraception and sterilisation. Being free to decide their future for themselves, they have actively participated in the state's family planning programme. About 71% of all women of childbearing age, that is, from 15 to 44, practised contraception according to a National Family Planning Survey carried out in 1977. Since the family planning programme began in 1965, a total of 88,913 women have been surgically sterilised (12).

The Women's Charter was not only drawn up to protect all women, single and married; such legislation has

undoubtedly contributed to raising the status of women in Singapore society. But what appears to augur well for all married women in the spheres of marriage and divorce does cast doubt in one's mind as to the duties of husbands in a marriage. Under Section 45, clause 1 of Part VI of the Act, it is stated that both husband and wife are mutually bound to cooperate with each other in caring and providing for the children (See Appendix 5.A). Although generally Singapore husbands do not fail to financially provide for their children, it is in the area of 'caring', among others, that they often fall short of their duty and obligation. Childrearing and socialisation appear to be the prerogative of the wives and mothers as studies by Tham (17) and Wong (40) and the responses of the author's interviewees (35) have shown.

In cases where both husbands and wives are in employment, it is usually the wife, before she sets out for work, who attends to the comforts of her offspring and upon her return from work, again sees to cooking the evening meal, laying the table, washing the dishes, tidying up the house and putting the children to bed. Her day's work and household chores start usually at six in the morning and end late into the night. In a survey conducted by the Singapore Sunday Monitor (12/8/1984; p.5), Singapore housewives were found to be totally responsible for housework which includes attending to and supervising the children in their studies while their husbands seldom or never cook dinner, wash up after meals, wash clothes or help keep the house clean.

This reflects the Asian male attitude to housework and to the role of their spouses in the home - an attitude that is shared by many Western men.

Today, the mass media has come to play a vital role in our lives, influencing our views, affecting our ideas about ourselves and other people through pictures and in print, on the air and on the screen. The advertisement, both on screen and in magazines and newspapers, is one of the most powerful agents of the mass media in forming our ideas of the world. Contemporary media images tend to depict women as subservient beings with sex-defined roles (42). Trauth and Huffman (42) referred to a study on television advertising by the American National Advertising Review Board which points out,

> An endless procession of commercials on the same theme, all showing women using household products in the home, raises very strong implications that women have no other interests except laundry, dishes, waxing floors, and fighting dirt in any form.... Seeing a great many such advertisements reinforces the traditional stereotype that 'a woman's place is in the home'.
> (Cited by Caldwell (43), p.58)

What is at issue here, Trauth and Huffman assert, is not the process of stereotyping itself but rather the accuracy of the stereotyped images presented. The most significant point emphasised by the National Advertising Review Board was its concluding statement that television advertisement generally reinforce the traditional stereotype that a woman's place is only in the home (42).

Meanwhile, in the United Kingdom, Adam and Laurikietis (42) have classified the five main types of image for women which appear in nearly all the advertisements both on screen and in print: the Carefree Girl, the Career Woman, the Hostess, the Wife and Mother and the Model. The Carefree Girl is the vehicle for selling the fun things in life (44). Being unmarried, she is identified with those who are young and still single. The Career Women are usually portrayed as secretaries or nurses. Rarely do working wives appear in advertisements, thus, the impression that the audience gets is that most women need not have to work for a living - they are maintained by their fathers or husbands or boyfriends (44). The basic theme in the advertisements which portray the Hostess and the Wife and Mother, is the home and family. While the Hostess is notably attractive, fashionable and sophisticated, featured in a home background with the latest gadgets, the latter is plain, older and contented, set in a pleasant, cosy home. Both, however, highlight the home as the only place for a woman. The Model who usually advertises clothes and make-up products, is not only seen as cool, distant and untouchable, but as Adam and Laurikietis (44) point out, bears the least resemblance to real life.

On the other hand, men who appear in advertisements are also as stereotyped as women. They are either in the roles of Husband and Father, Boyfriend or Friend, as Model, Worker or He-Man/Hero. Thus the images

and messages which the mass media produce, influence and reinforce our perceptions of the men and women who make up our society. For housewives and mothers, the mass media not only show approval, for instance of what the roles of the home-centred hostess and wife are doing, but reassure them that it is the 'right' thing to do (44).

Advertising in the mass media in Singapore is controlled to a large degree by multinational corporations with western connections. Males are stereotyped as workers and important contributors to the economy, as providers for the family, as rugged athletes or smart looking executives, while females are stereotyped as mothers and housewives whose activities are mainly confined to using household products in the home. Thus, the projection of Singapore males and females in stereotyped roles reinforce audience views and concepts of the traditional roles of both sexes.

The granting of completely equal voting rights to women in 1957 coupled with compulsory voting in Singapore, has made it possible for women to vote in all general elections since 1959. Although few women have entered the executive circle in the political arena, nevertheless, they have made significant contributions through their dedication and support behind the scenes. The absence of elected women members of parliament from 1970 to 1980 had aroused the concern of many women especially the growing population of better-educated and more politically conscious women. Pressure from this group made the top echelon (all male) of

the ruling party aware of the need to put up some women candidates in the general elections of 1984. The party, therefore, fielded three women candidates. The opposition parties too fielded a number of women candidates so women in Singapore are not removed from the political scene altogether. Their participation in politics, in the trade union movement and in professional, voluntary, cultural and sports organisations which were established and managed by women themselves, are indicative of their ability and resourcefulness in projecting their interests and publicising their needs.

The gradual rise in the number of female admissions into tertiary institutions in the last decade particularly, is a signal achievement for women. Here is a positive example for women to emulate. Higher academic achievement not only opens doors to attractive offers and positions in the business, financial and political sectors but is a sure step up the occupational strata which brings with it social recognition and status. According to Table 5.J, there has been a sharp increase especially in the number of women at present who earn a gross monthly income of between $1,000 and $2,999 from their figures two decades ago. Where less than 300 were earning over $3,000 per month in 1977, their numbers have enlarged ten-fold in 1984. This is evidence of an upward mobility in employment for women. A contributory factor, no doubt, is the large increase in the number of better-educated females in 1984 compared to

1974. According to Table 5.K, the number of females with secondary qualification doubled, while those with post secondary qualification almost tripled and those with tertiary qualification were more than three times their numbers during the period 1974 to 1984. However, the bulk of Singapore females remain academically less qualified than males generally. Table 5.K shows that a total number of 607,006 of females compared to 569,138 of males fifteen years and above in 1984, have never attended school, have only primary or post primary qualifications. This factor combined with the lack of technical and vocational training available to them in schools in preparation for their future employment, is reflected in their standing in the labour market as discussed in Chapter 6.

On the surface, although constitutionally Singapore women in general enjoy equal rights and privileges with men, there still exist many avenues which are closed to women. As pointed out earlier, women have been and still are visibly scarce in top management in the private and public sectors. There are altogether 14 government ministries yet, to date, no woman has ever been promoted a Permanent Secretary, the top civil servant of the unit. There are over 1,000 locally qualified and foreign trained lawyers and a considerable number serve as magistrates, advocates and solicitors in all the ministries and statutory boards yet since self-government in 1959, no woman has been appointed a High Court Judge. In employment in particular, wide disparities in pay prevail in the private sector, while

in both sectors, women do not enjoy the same medical and other benefits as men while only limited maternity benefits are accorded to women.

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to focus on the main strands of change that have taken place in the last quarter century and the impact of these changes on all Singapore females in general. It is irrefutable that all Chinese and Indian women have benefitted from the Women's Charter while the Malay women have benefitted from the Muslim Acts of 1957, 1960 and 1966 which placed them on almost equal status with men. Educational and political opportunities available to them have resulted in increased female enrolment in tertiary institutions, in membership in political parties, trade unions and in various women's organisations.

In the last two decades in particular, Singapore's economic progress has surpassed all expectations. This dramatic economic performance would not have been possible without the dedication and appropriate work attitudes of the entire labour force, of which over one-third comprise women. Women, thus, form a necessary and complementary force to male workers, but they still do not receive the same treatment as males in terms of pay, medical and other benefits. These and other subtle forms of discrimination, for example, in promotions and selections for advanced

training to upgrade their skills, have resulted in few women being in top supervisory positions. Thus, the numerous disparities that exist in employment between male and female workers and the types, length and consistency of women in employment, will be looked into in Chapter 6.

The dual labour market with its primary and secondary sectors which cut across firms and industries, is visibly present in the Singapore labour market. It is intended in the following chapter to discover which category the bulk of the female labour force falls into and whether they are confined to female-oriented jobs - factors which can affect their pay, job security, fringe benefits and ultimately, their upward mobility.

CHAPTER 6
SINGAPORE WOMEN IN EMPLOYMENT FROM THE 19TH CENTURY TO THE PRESENT DAY

6.1 Introduction

Women all over the world have always worked both within and outside the home. Even in early civilisations, women have contributed effectively to their families' subsistence by their labour in the fields: ploughing, sowing, gathering and harvesting while their menfolk were out hunting. Throughout the pre-industrial period, both Western and Eastern women continued to attend to their household chores as well as assist the men in the fields. In oriental society in this period, some women helped in managing shops and inns and those with some education, sought gainful employment in the homes of the wealthy as governesses. After the industrial revolution had changed the economic structure of the Western world, women in Western society were actively engaged in the factories, working long hours, for example, in the cotton mills. In the First and Second World Wars, women formed the support group helping in the manufacture of arms and ammunition and attended to the wounded and dying while the men were at the warfront. In the East today, their presence is being felt in the industrial societies that are emerging where their patience, dexterity and nimble fingers are put to good use, for example, in electronic and electrical and textile factories. However, never throughout the centuries, have

both Western and Eastern women enjoyed parity with men in pay or in conditions of employment as studies both in the West and East have shown (1).

As early as 1888, the British Trades Union Congress (TUC), for example, had passed a resolution which called upon the government to adopt the equal pay for the same work scheme for men and women (1g), but in 1918 a government committee studying the future relationship between men's and women's wages decided against equal pay and it was not until 1970 that the Equal Pay Act was finally passed. In the period 1951-1971, the percentage of female participation in the workforce as a whole in the United Kingdom had increased from 34% to 43% with the majority of women's jobs confined to unskilled and semi-skilled work in a limited number of industries (2). They were concentrated in occupations which Webb (3) terms as "the ten deadly Cs': catering, cleaning, clerking, cashiering, counter-minding, clothes-making, clothes-washing, coiffure, child-minding and care of the sick" (Webb (3), p.127). Webb (3) cites Baxandall et al (4) who point to the fact that "many of the jobs women are expected to do involve the direct servicing of people's immediate needs, and are often extensions of the types of jobs associated with domestic tasks" (Webb (3), p.127). In 1974, for example, while over 90% of females in the United Kingdom were predominantly nurses or were in unskilled full or part-time occupations as maids, valets, canteen assistants, typists or secretaries, over 90% of

males were in skilled occupations in the engineering trades and as administrators and managers, engineers and technicians and related workers (5). Besides, their hourly rates were often considerably lower than those of comparable men. In 1970, when the Equal Pay Act was passed in the United Kingdom, women's average gross hourly earnings (excluding overtime) were 63% of men's (1g).

In 1962, conforming with the United Nations endorsement of equal pay treatment (6), the Singapore Government took the first positive step towards narrowing the wage disparity that had existed since the latter 19th century when women first began to seek outside employment, by introducing equal pay for men and women in the civil service. This move was similar to that made by the British Government which first introduced equal pay for non-industrial civil servants in a staggered implementation from 1955 to 1961 (1g). Whereas the British Government had in the last two decades forged ahead with the Equal Pay Act 1970, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Equal Pay (Amendment) Regulations 1983, the Singapore Parliament has to date, not passed any legislation to this effect. Equal pay for women civil servants was the outcome of the Women's Charter of 1961 which was mainly drawn up to raise the status of Singapore women as discussed in Chapter 5. However, female participation rate in the civil service was approximately 10% of the total female labour force in Singapore. The rest continued to experience wide disparities in pay in the private sector. While the median

gross monthly income of all workers was $613 in June 1984, the median gross monthly income was $703 for males and $511 for females (See Table 6.Z, P.301). The female figure represents 72.7% of the male figure. Not only are women earning less than men but they are still concentrated in lower-skilled jobs in low-wage industries. In 1984 for example, in such occupations classified as professional, technical and related workers (947 females to 206 males) and service workers (9,221 females to 2,861 males) were earning less than $200 per month (See Table 6.AB, p.303). In all the 5 categories listed in Table 6.AB, males who earn $3,000 and above per month outnumber females. In the category of production and related workers, for example, while 1,523 males earned $3,000 per month, not a single female falls into that salary category. Besides, they also receive only limited maternity leave of two months on average, are passed over in promotions and are not entitled to a number of fringe benefits which their male colleagues enjoy both in the public and private sectors.

Investigations in the previopus chapter into the constitutional, political and educational changes that had taken place since 1959, revealed that despite attempts made to elevate the status of women, they still have not achieved parity with men in those three areas. Men continue to play prominent roles in society, are still heads of families and are the ultimate decision-makers in the private and public spheres. The reins of government are solely held by male

ministers. In 1984, only 5.7% of females compared to 25.2% of males of the total workforce earned more than $1,000 gross monthly income (See Table 5.J). In the educational system, only 24.7% females compared to 75.3% males were enrolled in technical colleges (See Table 5.I), the result of the disproportionate number of female students allowed to pursue technical subjects in secondary schools, a factor which has implications for the employment of women in a technological society.

This chapter is primarily a data-based research into women in employment. It will emerge from the study that the kind of sex-role stereotyping that existed in Singapore as the norm in the 19th century and through the First and Second World Wars, still exists in the labour force of today. Another area to be explored is whether discriminatory practices prevail today in the treatment of female workers vis-a-vis male workers in wages and salaries earned, medical and other fringe benefits and in promotions and training opportunities to upgrade their skills. Finally, this chapter will consider the frequency rates and patterns of economic activity of the single and married women and the women of the three major ethnic groups in Singapore.

6.2 Some labour market theories and their implications on the female labour force in Singapore

When the Singapore Government launched its

industrialisation project in 1968, it had to rely on foreign investment and expertise for the project to become a reality, since all that was available in Singapore itself was the existence of infrastructures and a large unskilled labour force. Multinationals from both the West and East responded to the invitation to set up branches in Singapore. They were attracted in particular to the availability of cheap labour together with other incentives such as lower tax rates and employment legislations designed to protect young industries (See Chapter 2, Section 2.4.1). However, to get their factories going, these multinationals had to employ foreign-trained high-skilled personnel to administer, supervise and train the local workforce. These skilled and professional men and women had to be paid according to the high standard of living they were used to. Besides attractive remuneration, other fringe benefits such as housing allowance, free medical treatment and hospitalisation charges for themselves and their immediate families which were met by the companies and company-paid holiday packages at the end of their three or five year contracts, were generally accorded to these personnel. These were some of the 'perks' to ensure continued service and job security. The cumulative result of these differences in conditions of employment between local and expatriate workers was the segmentation of the labour market into the primary and secondary sectors. The primary sector is generally made up of relatively well-rewarded and stable jobs while the secondary sector contains lower paid and

insecure occupations (7).

While it is possible to see a division into primary and secondary sectors identifiable in terms of expatriates and Singaporeans, it is also possible to analyse the local sector in similar terms but segmented on the basis of gender, slightly modified by race. The wave of Chinese women who joined the new industries that sprang up from 1970 onwards, ultimately fell into the secondary sector. Being, even more than men, unskilled at point of entry or even with limited skills acquired at schools or vocational institutes, they could easily be replaced since there was an ample supply of this class of workers. Comparatively, the standard of living of Singaporeans then and now, is much lower than that of expatriates, therefore it was, and still is, feasible to maintain low wages for local employees, especially those with little or no technical skills.

This means that the sexual division and inequality in wage labour can be explained at one level by productivity factors (8). Human capital theory sets off from the point of assumption that labour markets are perfectly competitive. While wages represent a return to investments in human capital via the direct relationship between human capital and productivity, individuals make investments such as education, training courses, job experience and on-the-job training in their potential productive capacity. Undoubtedly, these investments incur costs in the form of tuition fees and deferment of wages but they also have

returns in that they contribute to increased productivity and ultimately higher wages. As Siltanen (9) asserts, wage disparities between men and women are the outcomes of differences in their stock of human capital and, in effect, their productivity.

In comparing the stock of human capital between men and women, human capital theorists are of the view that generally women's stock of human capital is lower than that of men due to their dedication to childbearing. Their predominant role in the home and their orientation to the role of childrearing affect their stock in two ways: the first, assuming that they tend to devote more time to the family than to paid work, is that women tend to be less inclined to make human capital investments in the sense of further training, while the second, is that when women give up their paid jobs to concentrate on childrearing tasks full time, the period of their departure up to their readmission into the labour market later on, results in a deterioration of their accumulated stock of human capital, thus placing them in a less favourable position in competition with men.

Alternative ideas about human capital have a place in dual labour market theories. Here, it is important to note that training costs are seen as falling more on the employer than the employees. Doeringer and Poire (10) and Poire (11) outline their views concerning the creation and maintenance of a dual labour market structure. Some of their arguments summarised by Siltanen (9) below are as

follows:

1. The primary market is characterised by the skill specificity and the importance of on-the-job training. Since training costs are borne by employers, they will attempt to maximise their long-range investments in labour power. It will, therefore, be in their interest to reduce labour turnover in these jobs and employment stability becomes a key differentiating variable between primary and secondary markets.

2. The schism between the two markets is less oriented to technology and more a result of custom and practice. Many kinds of work could be performed within each sector. It is the influence of trade union organisation and managerial control in the codification of work rules relating to pay and promotion that fosters a schism between primary and secondary jobs.

3. Workers may be confined to secondary employment not because they do not have the requisite skills or qualifications but because they have, or are assumed to have, an unstable work pattern. While 'pure' discrimination may confine certain workers to the secondary market, statistical discrimination is an important factor in the assignment of workers to primary or secondary employment.

4. The incentive to employers of a dual market structure involves both maximising the return on training investment and trade cycle flexibility. In the latter case, the secondary sector acts as a buffer for the primary sector. For example, when product demand is low, a firm can shed labour from the secondary sector and rehire in that sector when product demand picks up.

(Siltanen (9), pp.29-30)

But, as was discussed in Chapter 1, the direction of causality in the two theories is different. In the human capital theory, the labour market is the product of exogenous factors such as the family and education; whereas in the dual labour market theory, social behaviour is

conditioned by the shape of the labour market and what opportunities or lack of them it appears to offer.

The role of governments is critical. For dual labour theorists, positive intervention is necessary if the pattern of employment is to be altered to achieve a system undifferentiated on the basis of gender. On the other hand, public policy can also be a source of discrimination against women. As Chiplin and Sloane (8b) point out, governments can affect the position of women in the labour market in three basic ways:

> 1. Discrimination in the provision of education which influences human capital formation of females;
>
> 2. Direct discrimination in public employment; and,
>
> 3. The absence of laws relating to employment and income and in particular equal pay and anti-discrimination legislation.
>
> (Chiplin and Sloane (8b), p.71)

Except for a clause in the Employment Act of 1968 which bans the employment of females in underground work for safety and health reasons, there is no discrimination in the employment of women in the public sector. There is, however, discrimination in the provision of education and this has been argued in Chapters 3,4 and 7. Examples of such discrimination are: the unequal ratio of secondary girls to boys who can pursue Technical Education (See Chapter 3, Section 3.6.1); the compulsory learning of Home Management courses for all secondary girl pupils from 1986 and the 30% quota of girls selected for the medical course

in the university (See Chapter 7, Section 7.6.1). The wage disparities that have prevailed in the private sector in the last quarter century since the implementation of equal pay for women in the public sector, have been the outcome of the absence of anti-discrimination legislation and laws relating to equal pay.

The following section on the history of female participation in employment in Singapore appears to corroborate these labour market theories. On the face of it, human capital theorists are vindicated by the history of 1819 - 1968. From 1969, however, events indicate that the dual labour market has more explanatory power. This is because allegedly innate cultural characteristics did prove themselves susceptible to change - at least briefly - at a time when there were public policy needs for greater female participation and state intervention to secure it. This and the effects on women of subsequent changes in public economic and industrial policy, support Chiplin and Sloane's (8b) view that governments and the precise forms of their interventions, are critical in equalising the position of women.

6.3 Female participation in the Singapore labour force in the pre and industrial periods

6.3.1 Pre-industrial period (1819-1968)

For over a century after the founding of modern Singapore in 1819, an uneven distribution of males to

females existed in the population as shown on Table 6.A below:

TABLE 6.A

DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY SEX, 1824-1970

Year	Male	Female	Sex Ratio*
	Number ('000)		
1824	7.1	3.6	1.99
1871	74.3	22.8	3.27
1901	170.0	57.6	2.95
1931	352.2	205.6	1.71
1957	762.8	683.2	1.12
1970	1,062.1	1,012.4	1.05

(Source: Census Reports 1824-1957 and Yearbook of Statistics 1970)

KEY
* = Number of males for each female

Men who formed the nucleus of society were predominantly migrants from neighbouring countries who came to the colony to seek their fortunes. They were either single men or if married, they left their wives and families behind. It was only after the 1930s that the disparity began to narrow. However, in the early years of the 19th century up to the outbreak of the Second World War, females made no impact on the labour market. The traditional Chinese, Malay and Indian societies did not encourage females to seek outside employment. The traditional view then among these ethnic groups was that the man was the head of the household and it was his duty to provide for the family. Females were trained mainly for marriage and motherhood. The absence of a national scheme which provided equal educational

opportunities for both sexes, led to the majority of females being uneducated. In 1947, for example, female literacy was only 199 per thousand (12). Lack of educational and technical skills impeded their entry into the labour market. Those who did receive a few years of education and had the blessings of their families to seek gainful employment, were able to take on low-paying, unskilled or semi-skilled jobs. They were employed either as clerks, typists, stenographers, hairdressers, midwives, nurses and teachers in traditionally female-oriented jobs.

Nearly all the female immigrants in the 19th century and up to the 1950s were illiterate. Male labourers dominated the colony and any work to be found was male-oriented. As Lebra and Paulson (12) point out, most women lacking experience in work outside the home, were thrown abruptly into male societies with no skills to market. It was not unnatural then that many single women in desperate circumstances, turned to prostitution to seek a livelihood. Besides, the practice of selling daughters into prostitution among the Chinese in particular, reinforced the traditional status of the Chinese women. Controlled by males, a woman could be bought and sold like property (12). Lebra and Paulson (12) further assert that the woman had no right to decide her own future; it was her duty to obey the decisions made by her parents or even guardians.

While rural China offered women a major role to play in agriculture, this was not so in Singapore, made up

as it is geologically of sand and granite and having little agriculture. The 19th century women who did seek employment went into service occupations in large and significant numbers mainly as domestic servants. Large numbers of women with no formal education or a few years of schooling, from the province of Guandong, for example, became market vendors. Another area of high female participation in the labour force was the hotel and catering sector where women worked as cooks, chambermaids, cleaners and waitresses.

In 1957, for example, a decade prior to Singapore's industrial expansion programme, female participation rate in the labour market had been only 17.8% of the total workforce as shown on Table 6.B below:

TABLE 6.B

FEMALE EMPLOYMENT IN ALL INDUSTRIES, 1957-1984

Year	Total Employed	Female Employed	Female % of Total	Increase in number	Percentage increase
1957	471,918	84,210	17.8		
1970	650,892	153,612	23.6	69,402	+ 82.4
1974	824,349	262,156	31.8	108,544	+ 70.7
1977	903,935	287,653	31.8	25,497	+ 9.7
1980	1,068,932	373,913	35.0	86,260	+ 30.0
1984	1,174,827	426,793	36.3	52,880	+ 14.1

(Source: (1) Report on the Census of of Population 1970.
(2) Reports on the Labour Force Survey of Singapore 1974, 1977, 1980 and 1984)

The highest concentrations of female workers were to be

found in such major industries as community, social and personal services (27.1%), manufacturing (24.2%) and commerce (10.1%) (See Tables 6.I(1), 6.F and 6.H).

Of the total female workforce in 1957, it was in such occupations as service workers (35.8%), production and related workers (25.1%), agriculture, animal husbandry and forestry workers (11.9%) and clerical and related workers (6.7%) as shown on Table 6.C that the highest participation rates of female workers were concentrated.

Within the category of service workers as shown on Table 6.D(1), 100% of domestic servants were females. Female hairdressers, barbers and beauticians came next, then those working as building caretakers, cleaners and public health workers and cooks, waitresses and other house-keeping service workers. A mere 311 or 9.9% of females compared to 3,150 or 99.1% males were in the category of managers and working proprietors. As for the category of production and related workers in Table 6.D(2), the highest percentage of females, that is, 23.1% of the total female workforce in this category, were tailors and dressmakers. Before the emphasis on industrialisation and the PAP scheme to provide as many homes as possible for the middle and lower income groups, a few agricultural small holdings existed, growing crops and raising animals. In 1957, of the total female workforce in this category, 9,848 or 97.9% were farmers or in occupations related to farming, compared to the other occupations as shown on Table 6.D(3).

TABLE 6.C

FEMALE PARTICIPATION BY OCCUPATIONS, 1957-1984

OCCUPATION	1957 Person	1957 Female	1957 Female %	1970 Person	1970 Female	1970 Female %	1977 Person	1977 Female	1977 Female %	1984 Person	1984 Female	1984 Female %
TOTAL	471,918	84,210	17.8	650,892	153,612	23.6	903,935	287,653	31.8	1,174,827	426,793	36.3
1. Professional, Technical and Related Workers	24,107	8,328	34.5	55,899	21,818	39.0	84,559	31,777	37.6	119,074	46,806	39.3
2. Administrative and Managerial Workers	7,870	259	3.3	11,344	645	5.7	28,007	1,917	6.8	70,024	12,165	17.4
3. Clerical and Related Workers	54,659	5,616	10.3	84,218	26,029	30.9	139,108	69,867	50.2	194,841	130,889	67.2
4. Sales Workers	86,320	8,630	10.0	105,558	16,433	15.6	141,586	36,280	25.6	161,990	52,611	32.5
5. Service Workers	71,135	30,112	42.3	88,812	35,884	40.4	97,593	43,389	44.5	129,983	65,516	50.4
6. Agriculture, Animal husbandry & Forestry Workers Fishermen & Hunters	37,113	10,057	27.1	26,943	4,950	18.4	23,160	5,580	24.1	12,741	2,861	22.5
7. Production and Related Workers, Transport Equipment Operators and Labourers	181,545	21,098	11.6	254,987	47,412	18.6	331,257	97,873	29.5	439,431	115,739	26.3
8. Workers not classifiable by occupation	9,169	110	1.2	23,131	441	1.9	58,665	970	1.7	46,744	206	0.4

Source: (1) Report on Census Population 1970;
(2) Reports on the Labour Force Survey of Singapore, 1970, 1977 and 1984.

TABLE 6.D(1)

EMPLOYED FEMALES BY SELECTED OCCUPATIONS IN THE CATEGORY OF SERVICE WORKERS, 1957-1977

OCCUPATION	1957 Person	1957 Female	1957 Female %	1970 Person	1970 Female	1970 Female %	1977 Person	1977 Female	1977 Female %
TOTAL	71,135	30,112	42.3	88,812	35,884	40.4	97,593	43,389	44.5
Managers and working proprietors, catering and lodging services	3,150	311	9.9	2,862	335	11.7	3,512	517	14.7
Cooks, waiters, bartenders and other house-keeping service workers	21,784	5,045	23.2	20,501	7,788	38.0	23,892	11,655	48.8
Domestic Service workers	19,243	19,243	100.0	20,173	19,137	94.9	16,524	15,856	96.0
Building caretakers, cleaners and public health workers	2,396	719	30.0	5,215	1,870	35.9	14,822	6,485	43.8
Hairdressers, barbers, beauticians and related workers	4,691	1,647	35.1	5,553	2,641	47.6	4,890	2,930	59.9
Others	19,871	3,147	15.8	34,508	4,113	11.9	33,953	5,946	17.5

Source: (1)Report on the Census of Population 1970;
(2)Reports on the Labour Force Survey of Singapore, 1970 and 1977.

TABLE 6.D(2)

EMPLOYED FEMALES BY SELECTED OCCUPATIONS IN THE CATEGORY OF PRODUCTION AND RELATED WORKERS, TRANSPORT EQUIPMENT OPERATORS AND LABOURERS, 1957-1977

OCCUPATION	1957			1970			1977		
	Person	Female	Female %	Person	Female	Female %	Person	Female	Female %
TOTAL	181,545	21,098	11.6	254,987	47,412	18.6	331,257	97,873	29.5
Production supervisors and general foremen	3,675	41	1.1	9,772	553	5.7	10,837	1,551	14.3
Spinners, weavers, knitters, dyers and related worker	477	175	36.7	3,652	2,730	74.8	6,075	4,955	81.6
Tailors and dressmakers and related workers	10,555	4,882	46.3	16,102	10,996	68.3	28,050	22,621	80.6
Electrical and electroni fitters, assemblers and wiremen	6,850	47	0.7	18,291	7,473	40.9	51,016	35,461	69.5
Printers and related workers	3,725	548	14.7	5,797	1,688	29.1	7,153	2,478	34.6
Others	156,263	15,405	9.9	201,373	23,972	11.9	228,126	30,807	13.5

Source: (1)Report on the Census of Population 1970;
(2)Report on the Labour Force Survey of Singapore, 1970 and 1977.

TABLE 6 D(3)

EMPLOYED FEMALES BY SELECTED OCCUPATIONS IN THE CATEGORY OF AGRICULTURAL AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY WORKERS AND FISHERMEN, 1957-1977

OCCUPATION	1957			1970			1977		
	Person	Female	Female %	Person	Female	Female %	Person	Female	Female %
TOTAL	37,113	10,057	27.1	26,943	4,950	18.4	23,160	5,580	24.1
Farm managers and supervisors	-	-	-	-	-	-	86	43	50.0
Farmers and other farm workers	27,496	9,848	35.8	19,247	4,727	24.6	20,747	5,321	25.6
Groundsmen and gardeners	5,123	169	3.3	4,447	150	3.4	194	0	0.0
Fishermen and related workers	4,494	40	0.9	3,249	73	2.2	2,133	215	10.1

Source: (1)Report on the Census of Population 1970;
(2)Reports on the Labour Force Survey of Singapore 1970 and 1977.

TABLE 6.D(4)

EMPLOYED FEMALES BY SELECTED OCCUPATIONS IN THE CATEGORY OF CLERICAL AND RELATED WORKERS, 1957-1977

OCCUPATION	1957 Person	1957 Female	1957 Female %	1970 Person	1970 Female	1970 Female %	1977 Person	1977 Female	1977 Female %
TOTAL	54,659	5,616	10.7	84,218	26,029	30.9	139,108	69,867	50.2
Executive officers and clerical supervisors	690	24	3.5	2,313	389	17.6	15,037	3,037	20.2
Transport and communication supervisors	372	0	0.0	1,436	47	3.3	3,167	172	5.4
Stenographers, typists and teletypists	4,650	2,458	52.9	10,009	8,136	81.3	15,361	13,874	90.3
Accounts and ledger clerks, cashiers and related workers	11,353	567	5.0	15,473	4,605	29.8	27,253	15,038	55.2
General office clerks and related workers	21,165	1,771	8.4	26,949	8,738	32.4)	78,290	37,746	48.2
Others	16,429	796	4.8	28,138	4,114	14.6)			

Source: (1)Report on the Census of Population 1970;
(2)Reports on the Labour Force Survey of Singapore, 1970 and 1977.

In the category of clerical and related workers in 1957, females featured prominently as stenographers (43.8%) and general office clerks (31.5%) of the total female workforce in this category. While 96.5% of males were executive officers and clerical supervisors, only 3.5% were females. The 24 females holding these positions represented 0.4% of the total female workforce in this category. The breakdown of the various occupations in this category is given in Table 6.D(4).

In the period prior to the intensive drive to establish full-scale industrialisation, female participation in the labour force besides being on a small scale, was also concentrated on a number of unskilled or semi-skilled traditionally female-oriented occupations as the above tables have illustrated. However, a different trend emerged from the 1970s onwards when progressively, female participation rates began to rise steadily and substantially and some women began to penetrate traditionally male-oriented occupations as factory supervisors, managers and executive officers, as the following section reveals.

6.3.2 The industrial period (1969-1979)

As pointed out in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.1, the PAP Government on the recommendation of the United Nations Industrial Survey Mission, decided on a policy of full industrialisation from 1968 onwards. "A more activist and interventionist approach" (Goh (13), p.84) taken by the government, replaced the laissez-faire policies of the

colonial era. The new approach, with the provision of sound social and economic infrastructures for economic development, the creation of a conducive environment and incentive to attract foreign investment and particularly the direct participation of the government in economic life, especially in the industrial sectors, resulted in the achievement of a progressively steady and rising economic growth rate from the early 1960s to 1984. During the period 1960 to 1979, Singapore achieved a growth rate of 12.2% for its GNP and its per capita GNP increased from S$1,330 in 1960 to S$9,293 in 1980 (14), the second highest in the East and South-East Asian region as Chen (15) notes.

Such an impressive advance would not have been possible without the participation of women in the labour force. According to Table 6.B, in the last twenty-seven years from 1957 to 1984, the number of single and married women employed in all industries had been on the increase both numerically and in percentage. Where the total number of women employed in 1957 was 84,210, in 1984, it had shot up to 426,793, representing an impressive increase of 342,583 (16). The percentage increase during the period of discussion was 406.8%.

Legislation in 1959, which had offered equal educational opportunities for boys and girls together with six years of free primary education, had helped to prepare females for their entry into the labour market. When multinationals accepted the government's attractive offer to

set up branches in Singapore in the early 1970s, there was a shortage of manpower to fill the thousands of jobs available since many of Singapore's agile and robust young men were in national service. National service was first introduced by the Colonial Government in December 1953 when the Legislative Council passed the National Service Ordinance which came into force on 1 March 1954. Under the Ordinance, all male persons who were either British or Federation of Malaya subjects and between the ages of 18 and 20, were liable to be called up for national service. The legislation, however, met with opposition from many quarters: parents, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, workers and particularly, from Chinese Middle School students. The Chinese community, in particular, was anti-national service since they strongly upheld the time-honoured saying, "Good sons don't make good soldiers" (Cited by Chen (17), p.117). Demonstrations coupled with anti-colonial sentiments, fanned by sustained communist agitation, Chen (17) further asserts, led to the withdrawal of the draft. However, it was re-introduced in 1967 by the PAP Government after Singapore became an autonomous state. There was then the urgent need to build up a national defence force which would be an "effective deterrent against potential external threats" (Chen (17), p.117), especially in anticipation of the withdrawal of British troops from the colony. Again the emphasis was on male citizens only. As with the Colonial Government, the PAP Government too met with much opposition from the public when compulsory national service for male

citizens only was first re-introduced (18).

With the potential male workforce yearly absorbed into national service, "womanpower got into stride" (Yu (19), p.115). Neverthless, studies by Lim (1b), Quah (1e), Salaff (1f) and Wong (1h) reveal that in the period prior to industrialisation, women were most heavily concentrated in the lowly-paid and unskilled or partly-skilled jobs. The three major sectors in the 1970s where female participation rates were highest were manufacturing, commerce and services including community, social and personal services. By 1977, as shown on Table 6.E, a higher proportion of females to males was evident in the manufacturing sector while the distribution of male to female workers in the latter two sectors became almost equal.

TABLE 6.E

PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYED PERSONS BY ECONOMIC SECTOR AND SEX, 1970 AND 1977

Economic Sector	1970		1977	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total Number	497,300	153,600	616,300	287,700
Total Percentage	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Manufacturing	19.0	31.3	22.2	37.7
Commerce	24.9	18.9	23.0	24.3
Community, social and personal services	23.7	38.3	22.7	22.4
Transport and communication	15.1	2.6	14.7	5.1
Other sectors	17.3	8.9	17.4	10.5

(Source: Reports of Labour Force Survey of Singapore 1970 and 1977)

In 1957, only 16,301 or 24.2% of females were employed in the manufacturing sector. That figure was increased almost threefolds in 1970. From 1970 onwards, the number of females who joined this sector grew progressively so that by 1984, they number 144,041, an impressive gain of 127,740 or a percentage increase of 783.6% over the 1957 figures as illustrated in Table 6.F below:

TABLE 6.F

FEMALE EMPLOYMENT IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR, 1957-1984

Year	Total Employed	Females Employed	Female % of Total	+ in Female - number	Percentage difference
1957	67,365	16,301	24.2		
1970	143,100	43,121	30.1	+ 26,820	+ 164.5
1974	234,231	104,950	44.8	+ 61,829	+ 143.4
1977	245,492	108,559	44.2	+ 3,609	+ 3.4
1980	312,641	143,860	46.0	+ 35,301	+ 32.5
1984	322,189	144,041	44.7	+ 181	+ 0.1

(Source: (1) Report on the Census of Population 1970;
(2) Reports on the Labour Force Survey of Singapore 1974, 1977, 1980 and 1984)

In a survey by the EDB in 1977, among the top fifty major companies in the manufacturing sector, the four industries with the highest proportion of female workers were garments (87.1%), electronic components (84.9%), electronic products (79.7%) and precision equipment, photographic and optical goods (74.6%). Table 6.G shows the breakdown of female workers in the manufacturing sector in 1977.

TABLE 6.G

EMPLOYMENT OF FEMALE WORKERS IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR IN 1977

INDUSTRY GROUP	Female workers as per cent of Total female workers in Manufacturing	Female workers as per cent of Total number of workers in Industry group
Food and Beverages	4.4	43.7
Textile	8.6	74.8
Garments	13.8	87.1
Wood and Cork Products	4.4	48.2
Paper and Paper Products	2.5	39.3
Leather and Rubber Products	0.4	24.7
Basic Industrial Chemicals	0.2	14.2
Other Chemical Products	1.1	35.5
Petroleum and Petroleum Products	0.3	9.1
Non-Metallic Mineral Products	0.7	19.8
Basic Metal Industries	0.3	11.7
Metal Products and Mechanical Engineering	9.5	41.1
Electrical Products	3.7	56.1
Electronic Products	14.8	79.7
Electronic Components	21.8	84.9
Transport Equipment	1.0	5.6
Plastic Products	2.0	50.1
Precision Equipment, Photographic and Optical Goods	8.2	74.6
Miscellaneous	2.3	70.0
TOTAL	100.0	55.9

(Source: Survey of Manufacturing Activity, Economic Development Board, Singapore. 1977)

It was in such occupations as spinners, weavers, knitters, dyers and related workers and tailors and dressmakers and related workers (See Table 6.D(2)), that the percentages of female workers were highest in 1970 and 1977 when women began to enter the labour market in large numbers. From 175 in 1957, the number of female workers in the first category above shot up to 2,730, an increase of 1,460% in 1970. By 1977, a further 2,225 was added to their number, showing a percentage increase of 81.5% over the 1970 figures. The second category also showed large gains in number from 4,882 in 1957 to 10,996 in 1970. The percentage increase here was 125.2%. A further increase of double the number of females in this category was seen in 1977. This time, the percentage was 105.7%. In the category of electrical and electronic fitters and assemblers, the biggest jump in female numbers from a mere 47 in 1957 to 7,473 in 1970, showing a percentage increase of 15,900%, was evident. A five-fold increase in number was again seen in 1977. The addition of 27,988 represented a percentage increase of 274.5%.

Women also featured prominently in the commerce sector. In 1957, as Table 6.H below shows, women numbered 13,246 of the total workforce in this sector. However, by 1984, their number had increased to 101, 578, an addition of 88,332. The percentage increase during the twenty-seven year period was 666.9%.

TABLE 6.H

FEMALE EMPLOYMENT IN THE COMMERCE SECTOR, 1957-1984

Year	Total Employed	Females Employed	Female% of Total	+ in Female - number	Percentage difference
1957	131,353	13,246	10.1		
1970	152,910	28,986	19.0	+ 15,740	+ 118.8
1974	172,650	50,168	29.1	+ 21,182	+ 73.1
1977	212,702	70,039	32.9	+ 19,871	+ 39.6
1980	244,696	86,131	35.2	+ 16,092	+ 23.0
1984	264,638	101,578	38.4	+ 15,447	+ 17.9

(Source: (1) Report on the Census of Population 1970;
(2) Reports on the Labour Force Survey of Singapore 1974, 1977, 1980 and 1984)

Here too, women occupied the lowest rungs working mainly as stenographers, typists, teletypists, receptionists, accounts and ledger clerks and cashiers. Progressively in the 1970s, the number of females who had taken on such jobs as stenographers, typists and teletypists in the first category and accounts and ledger clerks, cashiers and related workers in the second category had increased by large numbers and in percentages as shown on Table 6.D(4). In the first category, the numbers were enlarged from 2,458 in 1957 to 13,874 in 1977, an increase of 11,416 or 464.4%. Meanwhile, in the second category, from a mere 567, their numbers within the twenty-year span had risen to 15,038, an increase of 14,471 or 2,552.2%.

Table 6.I(1) shows the growth in numbers and percentages of females employed in the community, social and personal services sector from 1957 to 1984. In 1970 and 1974, substantial increases in female participation were

evident. However, in 1977, a reverse trend was seen with a drop of 4.7%. Three years later, it was a swing back to greater female participation in this sector and the growth rate continued well into the early years of the 1980s.

TABLE 6.I(1)

FEMALE EMPLOYMENT IN THE COMMUNITY, SOCIAL AND PERSONAL SERVICES SECTOR, 1957-1984

Year	Total Employed	Females Employed	Female % of Total	+in Female - number	Percentage difference
1957	146,479	39,754	27.1		
1970	162,372	54,949	33.8	+ 15,195	+ 38.2
1974	195,136	67,506	34.6	+ 12,557	+ 22.9
1977	139,992	64,351	46.0	- 3,155	- 4.7
1980	222,783	75,689	34.0	+ 11,338	+ 17.6
1984	242,182	96,720	39.9	+ 21,031	+ 27.8

(Source: (1) Report on the Census of Population 1970;
(2) Reports on the Labour Force Survey of Singapore 1974, 1977, 1980 and 1984)

Within this sector, in 1977, for example (See Table 6.I(2), the highest concentrations of female workers were in the categories of social, community and related services (51%) and personal and household services (32.3%) of the total female workforce in the sector. In the first category, for example, 11,307 or 34.4% of the total workforce comprised primary and secondary school teachers and teachers of technical and vocational institutes (11,042 or 97.6%), teachers of technical colleges (74 or 0.7% and the universities (191 or 1.7%) (20). In the second category, domestic service workers who numbered 15,856 in

Table 6.D(1), made up the bulk of female workers in this category. They represented 76.1%.

TABLE 6.I(2)

EMPLOYED FEMALES BY SELECTED OCCUPATIONS IN THE COMMUNITY, SOCIAL AND PERSONAL SERVICES SECTOR, 1977

Occupation	Total No.	Female No.	Female % of Total
Total	205,657	64,503	31.4
Public administration and development services	13,874	3,770	27.2
Defence,police and security and fire fighting services	79,927	3,792	4.7
Social,community and related services	62,865	32,876	52.3
Recreational and cultural services	9,372	2,887	30.8
Personal and household services	35,892	20,833	58.0
Others	3,727	345	9.3

(Source: Report on the Labour Force Survey of Singapore 1977)

By 1984, the three occupations which continued to attract the biggest number of female workers were in the categories of clerical and related workers and service workers (See Table 6.C). Although female participation rate in the labour force had grown from 17.8% in 1957 to 36.3% in 1984 (21), this figure is only comparable to those of Australia (39.2% in 1984). Countries of the West, for example, continue to have higher total female particiption rate than Singapore and other Asian countries like Japan, Hong Kong and Thailand (See Table 6.J(1), column 14).

TABLE 6.J(1)

PROPORTION OF FEMALE WORKERS BY INDUSTRY IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES

COUNTRIES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
CANADA (1983)	23.9	12.7	27.8	18.8	11.8	43.5	25.2	59.2	56.3	-	48.5	37.8	-	41.6
U.S.A. (1982)	19.8	14.6	33.0	17.8	8.0	47.5	28.3	53.2	58.6	-	52.4	-	8.7	42.7
AUSTRALIA (1983)	23.9	7.8	24.6	9.4	9.5	44.0	16.9	45.2	55.9	-	51.7	-	-	36.6
SWEDEN (1982)	25.4	14.3	26.6	17.5	7.9	52.2	27.7	47.2	70.3	-	54.5	48.4	-	46.3
HONG KONG (1982)	34.4	-	47.3	5.7	5.2	31.5	12.2	41.2	40.4	50.0	48.9	-	-	35.5
JAPAN (1982)	48.7	10.0	38.8	11.8	14.8	46.5	12.0	43.0	45.9	33.3	38.2	-	-	39.0
THAILAND (1980	49.5	24.0	42.1	9.2	14.1	54.0	6.6	-	46.1	40.0	47.6	33.7	-	47.3
SINGAPORE (1984)	23.5	16.3	44.7	14.6	8.8	38.4	17.6	49.7	39.9	7.6	-	-	-	36.3

KEY

(1) = Agriculture,Forestry,Hunting and Fishing
(2) = Mining and Quarrying
(3) = Manufacturing
(4) = Electricity,Gas and Water
(5) = Construction
(6) = Whole/Retail Trade,Restaurants and Hotel
(7) = Transport,Storage and Communication
(8) = Financing,Insurance,Real Estate and Business Services
(9) = Community,Social and Personal Services
(10) = Activities not adequately defined
(11) = Unemployed,not previously employed
(12) = Other enemployed
(13) = Armed forces
(14) = Total percentage of female workers in all industries

Source: (1)ILO Yearbook of Labour Statistics,1983;
(2)Report of Labour Force Survey of Singapore,1984.

TABLE 6.J(2)

DISTRIBUTION OF *FEMALE LABOUR FORCE BY OCCUPATIONS IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES

COUNTRIES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
CANADA (1984)	54.0	31.5	79.4	41.6	51.6	17.8	14.6	-	55.3	41.8	-	42.3
U.S.A. (1982)	46.5	28.8	80.6	46.1	60.6	16.7	19.8	-	52.4	-	8.7	43.6
AUSTRALIA (1984)	47.0	13.0	71.3	53.4	63.8	14.0	12.3	52.8	51.7	-	-	39.2
SWEDEN (1983)	54.9	20.7	80.9	47.2	75.9	16.5	18.4	-	58.3	47.5	-	48.0
HONG KONG (1982)	42.8	10.6	53.9	27.4	36.2	33.3	32.2	12.5	48.9	-	-	35.5
JAPAN (1983)	48.4	5.7	52.0	31.1	51.4	23.8	25.1	25.0	39.1	-	-	35.3
THAILAND (1980)	47.5	21.2	41.5	31.4	46.4	48.1	26.4	-	47.6	33.7	-	36.9
SINGAPORE (1984)	39.3	17.4	67.2	32.5	50.4	22.5	26.3	0.4	37.8	-	-	36.3

KEY

*Female labour force = Employed females only, not including employers, own account workers or unpaid family workers.

(1) = Professional,Technical and Related Workers
(2) = Administrative,Managerial and Executive Workers
(3) = Clerical and Related Workers
(4) = Sales Workers
(5) = Service Workers
(6) = Agricultural,Animal Husbandry and Forestry Workers and Fishermen
(7) Production and Related Workers,Transport Equipment Operators and Labourers
(8) Workers not classifiable by occupation
(9) Unemployed,not previously employed
(10) Other unemployed
(11) Armed forces
(12) Total percentage

Source: (1)ILO Yearbook of Labour Statistics, 1983 and 1984.
(2)Report of the Labour Force Survey of Singapore, 1984.

A cross cultural survey of the distribution of female occupations reveals that in both Western and Eastern countries, the heaviest concentrations of female workers are in the categories of clerical and related workers and as service workers, as shown on Table 6.J(2), columns 3 and 5. Thailand has less than 50 per cent women working as clerical and related workers but its figure for agricultural, animal husbandry and forestry workers (48.1%), is the highest of the eight countries listed on Table 6.J(2). In only 2 countries, that is, Canada (54.0%) and Sweden (54.9%) have the percentages for females in the category of professional, technical and related workers risen above 50 per cent. Where decision-making, supervisory and administrative expertise are taken into consideration, male workers continue to dominate both in the East and West. Except for Canada (31.5%), the United States (28.8%), Thailand (21.2%) and Sweden (20.7%) where over 20 per cent of females are in the category of administrative, managerial and executive workers, the percentages of the rest of the countries are way below 20 per cent with only 5.7% for Japan.

While female workers in Singapore are concentrated in traditionally low-skilled, female-oriented occupations and where few opportunities are available for traditionally male-oriented jobs in heavy industries which require higher skills, the same pattern is obvious, too, in other Eastern and Western countries. The low percentage of Singapore female workers as managers, supervisors and executives (See Table 6.C) reflects, it is argued, the disadvantaged

position of women in employment and the prejudice that the hiring bodies have towards women holding such posts. This was also the opinion of seven of the eleven oral history interviewees (See Chapter 8, Section 8.7). The educational system in the last quarter century has been organised in such a way that women who enter the labour market are not equipped for executive positions. With the emphasis on Home Management and little preparation for the wider world of Science and Technology, women are usually unable to cope with executive posts which require managerial, scientific and technological expertise in a highly industrialised society like Singapore.

6.3.3 The period of advanced technology from 1980 onwards

In 1979, the government decided on a policy to restructure the Singapore economy away from labour-intensive low-value added and low-wage activities towards skill and technology, namely technology-intensive and high-value added activities (22). In practical terms, as Chua (23) puts it, working women will increasingly need to operate computers and work with video-display units. Besides, they will work side by side with robots and with sophisticated machinery and equipment. Not only will the advanced technology alter the content of jobs and the nature of the skills, responsibilities and tasks of workers, but it will mean that workers need to be trained and re-trained.

Included in the EDB's investment promotion

programme are such industries as petrochemicals and chemicals and plastics, shipbuilding, machine tools, industrial machinery, medical equipment, office equipment, photographic and optical equipment, sophisticated electronic and electrical components and products, computer hardware and software, and various types of 'brain services' (24). The upgrading of existing products and processes together with the introduction of new industries and new products will increasingly necessitate capital-intensive production techniques, sophisticated equipment, and automated and computerised processes. Changes in technology with its emphasis on computer-related skills will ultimately result in the obsolescence of labour-intensive clerical and secretarial work and assembly and other industrial processes which for decades capitalised on the female stamina for routine repetitive tasks and work requiring manual dexterity (22).

Meeting the challenge of new technology entails the preparation of new entrants to the labour market with the appropriate educational background and training. For those already in the labour force, the upgrading of their educational and skill levels are necessary prerequisites so that their skills will not become obsolete. This would involve a massive task, taking into consideration the low educational attainment of females in the last decade. In 1974, 56.1% of females of the total population had never attended school, 24.8% had incomplete/completed primary education, 12.5% had completed secondary education while

only 3.9% had GCE 'A' and tertiary qualifications (See Table 5.K). A decade later in 1984, although more females had been educated, the figures as shown in Table 5.K are still skewed by the large numbers of older women who had either never received any education at all or had only progressed to the primary stage. The transition of women into the technological age was further handicapped by the fact that those who did receive secondary and tertiary education opted for subjects which were not directly related to the country's industrial and technological needs. While males tended to be more Science, Mathematics and Technology-oriented, female students tended to specialise in the Humanities, Languages and Home Economics (See Tables 5.G, 5.H, 7.Q and 7.R). A decisive contributory factor to the Science, Technology/Arts dichotomy between the sexes, is the MOE's discriminatory practice, instituted in 1969, of allowing all Secondary One and Two boy pupils to pursue a minimum of two years of Technical Education while granting only 50 per cent of the same cohorts of girl pupils that opportunity.

In line with its 1979 policy of restructuring the economy, a programme called Basic Education for Skills Training (BEST) was launched by the government with the collaboration of the NTUC. Classes in English, numeracy and basic computer skills were conducted for male and female employees in all industries who wished to upgrade their language, numerical and technical skills. Although in

general, working women in Singapore have responded well to BEST courses, particularly as Chua (23) points out, the course in English among the largely Chinese stream production workers in the food and beverage sector, attendance at these courses, depends on whether female workers have to use solely their own time or are given time off by management. Married women in particular, with family and home commitments, find it difficult to sacrifice several hours per week of their off-work schedule to attend classes. While some large companies are generally prepared to support their employees' desire for self-development by granting them time off to attend BEST or other vocational courses, there are still many large and small companies which have yet to respond to the advanced technological challenge.

Technological changes within a company often involve overtime or unfavourable shift systems and job re-design in the affected areas. Instead of the normal nine to five office hours, comprehensive automation in some industries have led to round the clock shift systems. A desire for family life and more normal leisure hours have culminated in high turnover, for instance, of the largely young female production workers in the food and beverage factory cited by Chua (23) in his paper. The switch to computerisation and automation also lead to new and often enlarged work patterns. While re-designation of tasks often causes much concern for the workers both males and females initially, this was at times not compensated by higher remuneration for handling more tasks. Promotions for

females are few and far between despite their apparent willingness to adapt to the new technology as Chua (23) asserts. A change in managements' attitude in this aspect is not only desirable but also a necessary move if the restructuring is to be a success since women constitute over 36% of the total workforce.

An industrial skills development fund for retraining workers and upgrading their skills was also established by the EDB. However, it is doubtful how many women workers will benefit from such government assistance since the fund aims at higher skills development rather than basic training (25). Bearing in mind that the bulk of women workers have never attended school or have attained only primary qualification and are generally unskilled, they will automatically be disqualified from applying for courses drawn up from the fund. The industrial transformation as Wong (26) predicts, may result in women workers being the first victims of industrial lay offs because of their educational and technological deficiencies or because multinationals may decide to turn to neighbouring countries where wage costs are more competitive.

6.4 Single and married women's participation in the labour force

Both single and married women have contributed effectively to Singapore's rapid industrialisation programme and the impressive economic growth of the colony

particularly from 1970 onwards. In 1957, the overall economic activity rate for females fifteen years of age and over was 21.6% but the rate rose to 29.3% in 1970. During the same period, the rate for males dropped from 87.7% to 82.3% as shown on Table 6.K.

An examination of the figures from Table 6.K shows that the increase in female market participation rate in 1957 was heaviest for those in the 40 - 54 age group while in 1970, it was for those in the 15 - 24 age group. Their participation rate in 1970 decreased from age 25 and above and the decline continued right up to age 65 and above. In both 1977 and 1984, the highest concentrations of female workers were in the 20 - 24 and 25 - 29 age groups. Increased educational opportunities beyond secondary levels have resulted in later female entry into the labour market while postponement of marriage among the educated have retained many young women in the workforce. Not only are single women marrying later but those with tertiary education are also producing fewer children than those who are uneducated or have had only a few years of schooling as shown on Tables 6.L(1) and 6.L (2) below:

TABLE 6.K

AGE SPECIFIC ACTIVITY RATES BY SEX, 1957-1984

AGE GROUP IN YEARS	1957			1970			1977			1984		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
All persons aged 15 years & over	57.0	87.7	21.6	56.6	82.3	29.3	58.8	78.7	37.9	63.4	81.2	45.8
15 - 19	42.0	59.4	23.4	49.5	55.7	43.0	41.1	41.7	40.6	36.9	36.7	37.1
20 - 24	58.6	92.3	22.9	73.5	92.9	53.6	81.8	90.9	72.1	85.1	90.2	79.9
25 - 29	60.1	98.0	16.5	64.5	98.0	30.8	73.8	96.8	50.2	81.3	97.2	65.7
30 - 34	62.6	98.6	17.3	60.6	98.3	22.7	66.6	97.9	35.5	74.1	98.6	50.0
35 - 39	64.5	98.5	20.8	60.2	98.4	19.3	64.0	98.4	32.2	71.4	98.6	44.6
40 - 44	66.8	98.0	26.3	60.8	98.1	17.8	62.2	98.2	27.5	69.9	98.4	42.0
45 - 49	67.9	97.0	30.1	60.0	96.2	17.5	61.2	96.2	24.3	65.1	96.8	34.4
50 - 54	65.4	93.5	28.8	55.0	88.1	17.5	57.0	89.7	19.1	58.7	91.5	25.0
55 - 59	57.9	85.1	24.7	46.2	73.9	16.2	43.3	70.9	15.6	47.4	74.4	18.8
60 - 64	41.8	66.9	17.1	35.0	55.6	13.4	34.8	57.7	12.9	34.4	54.1	14.2
65 & over	19.5	38.9	6.7	17.7	31.9	6.5	17.7	31.0	6.4	15.7	27.3	6.7

Source: (1) Report on the Census of Population 1970;
(2) Reports on the Labour Force Survey of Singapore, 1977 and 1984.

*TABLE 6.L(1)

PRESENT AND PROJECTED DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALE POPULATION IN SINGAPORE, 1980 (In percentage)

Highest qualification	Present population	Projected population	Unmarried women 40 and above	Projected wastage	Adjusted mean no. of children
No qualification	44.1	12	3.6	0.4	3.50
Primary	37.4	20	6.1	1.2	2.73
Secondary	12.5	52	10.3	5.4	1.93
Upper Secondary	4.5	9	8.4	0.8	2.02
Tertiary	1.5	7	13.4	0.9	1.65
Total	100.0	100	4.3	4.3	3.01

Note: These figures can be taken as the mean number of children born alive to all women aged between 35 and 39 years.

(Source: Figures obtained from 20 per cent sample of Census of Population Singapore, 1980)

*TABLE 6.L(2)

MEAN NUMBER OF CHILDREN BORN ALIVE TO PER EVER-MARRIED WOMAN AGED 10 -39 YEARS BY HIGHEST QUALIFICATION AND ETHNIC GROUPS IN SINGAPORE, 1980 (In Percentage)

	Mean number of Children Born Alive						
Highest qualification	Chinese	Malay	Indians	Others	Total	Adjusted Mean	With 4 or more children
No qualification	2.72	2.96	2.91	1.71	2.77	2.67	28.6
Primary	1.77	1.99	1.99	1.75	1.82	1.71	9.3
Secondary	1.27	1.27	1.27	1.53	1.29	1.16	2.0
Upper Secondary	1.29	1.26	1.53	1.53	1.33	1.22	1.9
Tertiary	1.19	0.61	1.53	1.44	1.27	1.10	1.5
Total	1.98	2.23	2.07	1.57	2.02	1.93	13.9

*Tables 6.L(1) and 6.L(2) were cited from Lee (27), p.5

(Source: Figures obtained from 20 per cent sample of Census of Population Singapore, 1980)

The high percentage of unmarried women aged 30 and above with tertiary qualification and the low percentage of highly educated married women who have the least number of children compared to the high percentage of women with little or no education who have more than two children, as revealed in Table 6.L(1), have caused considerable concern to the Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew. In his speech on 14 August 1983 (27), he outlined the advantages of a future Singapore society in which a reverse trend in procreation should be encouraged. Whereas uneducated mothers should be discouraged from producing more children, graduate mothers on the other hand, should be encouraged to have more children "to be adequately represented in the next generation.... since for every two graduates in 25 years time, there will be one graduate, and for every two uneducated workers, there will be three" (Lee (27), p.6).

To achieve the objective of starting what could be seen as a 'master race', a number of schemes were introduced. Children of graduate mothers were given priority in admission to the 'best' schools - and in Singaporean eyes this means the most academic schools. The very bright students were separated from the rest and placed on special express courses so that their progress would not be hampered by their not so bright classmates and finally a dating and introduction service for single graduates was initiated (28). The Prime Minister's 'breeding for brilliance' policy, however, met with much opposition from the public and from graduate women in particular. Recently,

the highly controversial policy was found to be unworkable and is to be abandoned (28).

Social values favouring traditional sex-role stereotypes in occupations remain highly influential in the Singapore context while another trend is the female withdrawal from the labour market upon marriage and child-bearing. Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, the peak of female labour participation was reached in the 20 - 29 age group. The decline that followed coincided with the average age of marriage, that is, 24.2 years for females in Singapore.

From 1974 to 1984 while there have been marked increases in the numbers of both single (from 163,520 to 228,597, a percentage increase of 28.5%) and ever-married women (from 98,636 to 198,195, a percentage increase of 50.2%) in the labour force, Table 6.M also reveals a progressive increase in the number of single women aged between 20 and 54 and 65 and over, and in the number of married women aged 20 and 65 and over, in employment. Where only 487 women in 1974 have remained single and continued employment up to the official retirement age of 60 and sought re-employment after retirement, the number has increased to 1,173, a percentage increase of 58.5% in 1984. The numerical increases in both married and single women in the labour market reflect in the case of married women, the need to help subsidise their family incomes and in the case of single women, the need to support themselves. From 1974

TABLE 6.M

EMPLOYED PERSONS 15 YEARS AND OVER BY AGE, MARITAL STATUS AND SEX, 1974 AND 1984

AGE GROUP IN YEARS	1974				1984			
	MALE		FEMALE		MALE		FEMALE	
	Single	*Ever-married	Single	Ever-married	Single	Ever-married	Single	Ever-married
TOTAL	222,332	339,861	163,520	98,636	289,297	458,738	228,597	198,195
15 - 19	61,047	583	61,823	1,068	45,880	309	42,545	721
20 - 24	92,469	13,453	68,234	11,121	116,336	9,201	94,806	15,047
25 - 29	45,554	43,029	22,971	18,164	78,978	50,860	51,355	39,129
30 - 34	11,219	51,285	4,468	16,173	28,096	89,146	22,312	38,161
35 - 39	5,876	56,239	2,137	15,687	8,830	81,325	8,892	32,254
40 - 44	2,671	48,905	826	11,267	3,931	66,483	3,437	27,478
45 - 49	1,166	43,272	680	8,305	2,882	55,390	1,935	19,451
50 - 54	777	35,016	340	6,606	1,873	44,933	1,070	11,526
55 - 59	534	21,514	777	4,614	1,317	29,948	617	6,937
60 - 64	437	15,152	777	2,963	638	17,001	453	4,095
65 & over	582	11,366	487	2,670	536	14,141	1,173	3,395

* Ever-married category includes those currently married, widows/widowers and divorced men and women.

Source: Reports of the Labour Force Survey of Singapore 1974 and 1984.

to 1984, the number of single males in employment between the ages of 30 to 64 have also increased. Thus from the figures of both single males and females in Table 6.M there appears a trend among this category of employed persons to remain unmarried throughout their working life. Data showing the academic backgrounds of single males and females according to age groups are unavailable. However, it can be assumed that it is generally the better educated and more highly acedemically qualified men and women who are marrying later or who tend to remain unmarried. It was this category of females in particular, that was highlighted in the Prime Minister's 'breeding for brilliance' plan for Singapore as documented earlier.

Table 6.M also shows that the peak of single female participation was reached in the 20 - 24 age group in both 1974 and 1984. For married women, the peak was in the 25 - 29 age group in both 1974 and 1984. The withdrawal of married women from the labour force reflected the role conflict and role strain that they generally experienced. As Quah (1e) points out, compared to single female workers, married female workers face the highest degree of incompatible role demands and expectations in their daily lives. More of their time is demanded by concurrent job, marital, childcare and commitments to housework. In general, the roles of housewife and mother are traditionally perceived as the major, if not the only, goals of women in society, as Quah (1e) further stresses. A solution to the problems of role conflict and role strain for the women who

could afford it, was withdrawal from the labour market.

A comparative study of female participation rate by age group in 3 Western and 3 Eastern countries is illustrated in Table 6.N. Of the six countries under review, Singapore had the highest fluctuation rate of female participation followed by Hong Kong. The other Asian country which was an exception was Japan which had the third lowest fluctuation. While this trend was unusual in a society which places strong emphasis on marriage, motherhood and the superiority of the male sex, a study by Lebra, Paulson and Powers (29), for example, suggests that the high female participation rate in Japan is due mainly to family or individual financial need. On the other hand, the trend towards shared-roles in Sweden is reflected in the high stability of female labour force participation rate. Sweden is one of the Western countries which emphasises sexual equality and treatment in education, for example, by means of the textbooks used in its Education's Sex Role Project (See Chapter 7, Section 7.1).

While shared-roles is not the norm among Singapore married couples, nevertheless, it is gradually becoming the trend among the younger age group of English-educated couples. Meanwhile the need to support themselves and sometimes their parents among the single females and the realisation that self-fulfilment goes well beyond marriage and motherhood (1e), have probably kept these women in paid employment. Cheap and easily accessible family planning

TABLE 6.N

FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES IN SINGAPORE AND OTHER SELECTED COUNTRIES BY AGE GROUP

AGE GROUP IN YEARS	SINGAPORE (1984)	HONG KONG (1983)	JAPAN (1983)	U.STATES (1982)	SWEDEN (1983)	U.KINGDOM (1983)
16 - 19	37.1	38.2	18.7	42.0	47.5	70.2
20 - 24	79.9	83.6	72.1	70.0	80.7	68.6
25 - 29	65.7	65.7	52.8	69.0	86.3	62.5
30 - 34	50.0	51.8	50.4	67.1	85.6	
35 - 39	44.6	52.8	60.3	66.7	87.3	
40 - 44	42.0	51.9	67.6	68.7	89.2	
45 - 49	34.4	47.4	66.9	65.2	89.0	68.3
50 - 54	25.0	39.9	60.6	57.9	84.2	
55 - 59	18.8	31.6	51.5	49.4	73.7	50.8
60 - 64	14.2	27.2	39.6	33.1	46.7	8.1
65 - 69	6.7	11.1	27.4	14.7	6.1	-
70 and over	-	-	10.9	6.9	1.9	-
Total	36.3	37.0	38.3	40.3	46.6	47.6

Source: (1)Report on the Labour Force Survey of Singapore,1984.
(2)Yearbook of Labour Statistics,ILO,1983.

facilities spearheaded by the SFPPB (See Chapter 5, Section 5.5), have also contributed to the higher participation rate by married women who were no longer burdened by successive pregnancies. Perhaps the most fundamental problem lies with the Singapore males' self image. Most husbands do not see their role as one of assisting in the work of the home. The idea of shared-roles has yet to become the norm in the family of the older generations of both educated and illiterate Singaporeans.

6.5 Activity rates of Singapore women by ethnic groups

The Chinese, Malays and Indians have been the three dominant ethnic groups that make up the population of Singapore since the 19th century. For the first decade after its foundation, there were more Malays than Chinese, but soon after, the latter group overtook the former and became the biggest ethnic group. By the 1970 census count, the Chinese figure stood at 76.2%, Malays 15.0%, Indians 7.0% and the residual 1.8% being made up of the other minority groups (16). A further increase in the percentage of Chinese was seen in 1980. In that year, the Chinese constituted 76.9%, the Malays 14.6%, the Indians 6.4% and persons of other ethnic groups, the remaining 2.1% (30).

Of the three major ethnic groups in the labour market in 1970, the Chinese female percentage was highest, that is, 27% while the Malays' was the lowest, that is, 14.3% as shown on Table 6.0. However, a decade later,

impressive increases in the percentages of Malay and Indian women were evident. The rate of increases of both these ethnic groups of women more than doubled. Among the Chinese women, the increase was a moderate 12.7% compared to Malays and Indians.

TABLE 6.0

LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES BY ETHNIC GROUP AND SEX, 1970 AND 1980

ETHNIC GROUPS	1970			1980		
	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %	Male %	Female %
Total	46.6	67.6	24.6	55.9	72.0	39.3
Chinese	46.9	66.8	27.0	55.6	71.5	39.7
Malays	40.8	66.3	14.3	55.7	71.9	38.3
Indians	53.6	75.4	16.0	59.7	75.3	38.2
Others	49.8	73.9	23.9	55.1	77.4	31.1

(Source: Report on the Census of Population Singapore, 1980)

Of all the major industries listed on Table 6.P, the largest number of employed females was to be found in the manufacturing sector. The highest concentration of female workers among the three major ethnic groups in 1980 was also in this sector. Another sector where the women of the three major ethnic groups featured prominently was the community, social and personal services sector. While a large number of Chinese women, that is, over 75,000 were employed in the commerce sector, comparatively small numbers of Malay (6,343) and Indian (2,204) women were found here. 309 Chinese women worked in the mining and quarrying sector but none of the other two ethnic groups were represented in

TABLE 6.P

EMPLOYED FEMALES 15 YEARS AND OVER BY INDUSTRY AND ETHNIC GROUPS,1980

INDUSTRY	TOTAL			CHINESE			MALAYS			INDIANS			OTHERS		
	Total	Female	Female %	Total	Female	Female %	Total	Female	Female %	Total	Female	Female %	Total	Female	Female %
TOTAL	1,068,932	373,913	35.0	817,110	292,808	35.8	158,669	55,773	35.2	72,661	20,307	27.9	20,493	5,025	24.5
(1)*	14,108	3,522	25.0	13,346	3,439	25.8	597	21	3.5	144	62	3.0	21	-	-
(2)*	1,606	309	19.2	1,298	309	23.8	82	-	-	62	-	-	165	-	-
(3)*	312,641	143,860	46.0	230,403	101,742	44.2	58,203	31,923	54.8	18,824	9,309	49.4	5,211	886	17.0
(4)*	9,639	1,071	11.1	3,645	783	21.5	3,357	124	3.7	2,492	144	5.8	144	21	14.6
(5)*	58,141	5,252	9.0	49,203	4,737	9.6	6,137	350	5.7	2,327	144	6.2	474	21	4.4
(6)*	244,696	86,131	35.2	207,459	76,883	37.1	19,834	6,343	32.0	13,943	2,204	15.8	3,460	700	20.2
(7)*	122,420	20,760	17.0	88,952	15,550	17.5	22,120	3,378	15.3	8,980	1,339	14.9	2,368	494	20.9
(8)*	79,067	37,134	47.0	60,448	31,491	52.1	11,286	3,419	30.3	4,716	1,627	34.5	2,616	597	22.8
(9)*	222,783	75,689	34.0	158,813	57,688	36.3	36,784	10,215	27.8	21,152	5,478	25.9	6,035	2,307	38.2
(10)*	3,831	185	4.8	3,542	185	5.2	268	-	-	21	-	-	-	-	-

KEY

(1)* Agriculture,Forestry and Fishing;
(2)* Mining & Quarrying;
(3)* Manufacturing;
(4)* Electricity,Gas and Water;
(5)* Construction;
(6)* Commerce;
(7)* Transport,Communications & Storage;
(8)* Financing,Insurance,Real Estate & Services;
(9)* Community,Social & Personal services;
(10)* Activities not adequately defined.

Source: Report on Labour Force Survey of Singapore,1980.

TABLE 6.Q

PERCENTAGE OF ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE FEMALES (BY ETHNIC GROUPS) 15 YEARS AND OVER BY HIGHEST QUALIFICATION ATTAINED,1980

HIGHEST QUALIFICATION ATTAINED	TOTAL		CHINESE		MALAYS		INDIANS		OTHERS	
	Total %	Female %	Total %	Female %	Total %	Female %	Total %	Female %	Total %	Female %
TOTAL	100.0	35.1	76.4	36.0	14.9	35.1	6.8	28.4	1.9	24.9
Never attended school	11.2	42.8	11.5	44.5	11.4	39.4	9.8	27.9	2.8	62.1
Primary (PSLE and below)	46.5	28.1	45.1	27.8	55.5	29.9	50.8	27.1	18.8	29.8
Post Primary	0.8	11.6	0.6	13.4	1.7	9.5	1.1	5.2	0.4	25.6
Secondary	29.0	43.7	29.6	44.9	27.4	43.4	26.9	33.1	29.4	32.1
Post Secondary	9.2	38.3	10.1	38.8	3.6	49.8	8.2	29.4	19.4	24.9
Tertiary	3.2	28.6	3.1	33.1	0.4	35.7	2.9	19.6	28.0	10.9
Qualification not elsewhere classifiable	0.1	15.9	0.0	31.7	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	1.2	8.5

Source: Report of Labour Force Survey of Singapore,1980.

this sector.

Within the manufacturing and commerce sectors, for example, women of the three major ethnic groups were in occupations which were lowly-paid and lowly-skilled as shown on Tables 6.D(1), 6.D(2) and 6.D(4). A major factor contributing to the concentrations of these women on the lower scale of the labour-intensive industries and in female-designated jobs, is reflected in their educational attainments and qualifications. Among both the Chinese and Indian women, fifteen years and over in 1980, for example, as revealed in Table 6.Q, those with secondary or GCE 'O' level qualifications form the largest percentage of women with the highest qualifications attained. The highest percentage of Malay women with the highest qualification attained is at the post secondary level. However, with all the three ethnic groups, the lowest percentage is in the post primary level. Compared to their male counterparts whose attainment of tertiary education is well over 60% for the Chinese and Malay and over 80% for the Indians, it was not unusual then to find more males from all the three groups in a more advantageous position for executive and supervisory appointments.

The percentage of women who had never attended school across the three ethnic groups also ranked very high: second highest for the Chinese and third highest for both Malay and Indian women. The overall high percentage of these three ethnic groups of women in this category together

with those with only primary and post primary qualification, therefore placed them in a disadvantaged position in the labour market. For those with secondary qualifications, their partial exclusion from Technical Education in the first two years of secondary school, as discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.6.1, also contributed to their being less technically skilled than males with the same qualifications, when they entered the labour market.

6.6 Singapore women's participation in part-time employment

Unlike the United Kingdom where 4.5 million or 2.1% of the total employed were in part-time employment, in 1981 (31), Singapore's part-timers numbered only 29,616, close to 3% of the total economically active persons in the labour force in 1980 (32). While the male number and percentage were higher than the female's in 1980, a reverse in the trend was evident four years later (16). At the same time, as Table 6.R illustrates, the number and participation rate on the whole saw a decline. There were 1,516 less part-timers and the total represented 2.3% of the total workforce in 1984.

TABLE 6.R

PART-TIME EMPLOYED PERSONS BY SEX,

JUNE 1980 AND JUNE 1984

Year	Total No.	Male No.	Male % of Total	Female No.	Female % of Total
June 1980	29,616	15,982	54.0	13,634	46.0
June 1984	28,100	11,200	39.9	16,900	60.1

(Source: Reports on the Labour Force Survey of Singapore 1980 and 1984)

As Table 6.S below shows, in both years, that is, 1980 and 1984, the highest concentration of part-time workers was in manufacturing, commerce and services sectors which accounted for two-thirds of the part-time jobs. Part-time employment will become increasingly popular with employers and workers as wages continue to rise in a tight labour market. For employers, part-timers constitute an additional source of labour. The employment of part-time labour produces wage cost advantages for manufacturing employers in particular in the Singapore context whose workers are paid daily while workers in the other sectors normally receive monthly salaries. These advantages arise from less rigid schedules of working days, the wide association of part-time jobs with relatively low daily rates of pay and the general exclusion of part-time employees from eligibility for fringe benefits which full-time employees are entitled.

TABLE 6.S

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PART-TIME EMPLOYED PERSONS 15 YEARS AND OVER BY INDUSTRY AND SEX, 1980 AND 1984

INDUSTRY	1980 Total %	1980 Male %	1980 Female %	1984 Total %	1984 Male %	1984 Female %
Manufacturing	23.9	16.1	32.9	22.4	11.6	29.6
Construction	12.4	20.7	2.7	9.9	23.9	0.6
Commerce	20.5	20.6	20.4	27.4	26.7	27.9
Transport,Storage & Communications	10.6	18.3	1.5	6.1	13.0	1.5
Community,Social & Personal Services	23.8	13.2	36.3	26.4	15.3	33.8
Others	8.8	11.1	6.2	7.8	9.6	6.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(Source: Reports on the Labour Force Survey of Singapore 1980 and 1984)

In both 1980 and 1984, the highest total percentages of part-timers were in such occupations as production and related workers, transport equipment operators amd labourers; followed by service workers and thirdly by sales workers. With both male and female part-timers, the highest percentage was in the first category on the list on Table 6.T, while the lowest percentage was in the category of clerical and related workers in 1980. However, a change in trend took place in 1984. The percentage of females working as service workers increased by 4% resulting in that category having the highest concentration of female workers. Their participation rate was more than four times that of their counterparts in 1980 and almost three times that of males in 1984. The percentage of male service workers also increased

quite substantially, from 6.4% to 12.7%. In the first category, where the male percentage was almost double that of the female percentage in both years, male workers were mainly transport equipment operators and labourers while the females were generally confined to the textile, garment and electrical and electronic factories.

TABLE 6.T

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PART-TIME EMPLOYED PERSONS 15 YEARS AND OVER BY OCCUPATION AND SEX, 1980 AND 1984

OCCUPATION	1980 Total %	1980 Male %	1980 Female %	1984 Total %	1984 Male %	1984 Female %
Production & related workers, Transport Equipment operators & labourers	51.4	65.3	35.0	39.4	55.0	29.1
Service workers	16.4	6.4	28.1	24.4	12.7	32.1
Sales workers	14.1	14.1	14.2	16.7	16.7	16.7
Clerical & related workers	6.5	4.0	9.4	6.7	5.0	7.9
Others	11.6	10.2	13.3	12.8	10.7	14.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(Source: Reports on the Labour Force Survey of Singapore 1980 and 1984)

A review of the educational attainments of both male and female part-timers in Table 6.U would indicate the high participation rates of both sexes in the types of occupations they took on. While 89.8% in 1980 and 89.4% in 1984 of males were concentrated in the four occupations listed on Table 6.T, 86.7% in 1980 and 85.8% in 1984 of females were also prominently featured in these four occupations. Compared to males, a higher percentage of

female part-timers in both 1980 and 1984 had never attended school. With both sexes, the highest percentage of highest qualification attained was in the category of primary (PSLE and below). However, the percentage of females with tertiary education more than doubled the percentage of males with the same qualification.

TABLE 6.U

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYED PART-TIMERS BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENTS AND SEX, 1980 AND 1984

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	1980			1984		
	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %	Male %	Female %
Never attended school	27.0	22.8	32.0	20.3	16.4	22.9
Primary (PSLE & below)	52.0	59.2	43.6	17.7	20.4	15.9
Post Primary	0.9	1.3	0.5	35.7	41.5	31.9
Secondary	13.5	12.4	14.8	17.4	15.6	18.6
Post Secondary	5.2	3.6	7.1	5.8	3.9	7.1
Tertiary	1.3	0.6	2.0	2.5	1.5	3.2
Qualifications not elsewhere classifiable	0.1	0.1	-	0.6	0.7	0.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(Source: Reports on the Labour Force Survey of Singapore 1980 and 1984)

As Table 6.V illustrates, with both sexes, it was in the category of the 'ever-married' which included those widowed and divorced, that showed higher percentages compared to single persons who made up the part-time workforce. The same trend persisted in both periods. However, more married females than males were part-timers in 1980 and 1984. The bulk of married women in both years were

in the 30 - 39 age group as revealed in Table 6.W. This indicates the return of these women to the labour market after they had completed their child-bearing role or when their youngest child is of school going age. While boredom, the need to help subsidise the family income or in the case of those with tertiary education, the opportunity to revitalise their career fulfilment have encouraged their return, these women were still torn between family commitment and full-time employment. While full-time employment is the norm and the expected progression of all males when they complete their studies and begin to earn their living, traditional ideology still places emphasis on the married woman's devotion to home and child nurturing above occupational and professional pursuits. As documented in Section 6.4, married women in particular, are victims of role conflict and role strain. For those who continue working, "they suffer through considerable difficulties and divided loyalties. Those who leave, do so with considerable regret" (Ong (33), p.19). Society's lack of support and husbands who are "unwilling to share in the household chores" (Loh (34), p.35), have culminated in married women being solely responsible for running the household and attending to the upbringing of the children thus depriving them of the chance to seek full-time employment and self-fulfilment in their careers.

TABLE 6.V

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PART-TIME WORKERS

BY MARITAL STATUS, 1980 AND 1984

MARITAL STATUS	1980 Total %	1980 Male %	1980 Female %	1984 Total %	1984 Male %	1984 Female %
Single	36.7	44.6	27.5	28.7	39.7	21.4
Ever-married	63.3	55.4	72.5	71.3	60.3	78.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(Source: Reports on the Labour Force Survey of Singapore 1980 and 1984)

TABLE 6.W

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PART-TIME WORKERS

BY AGE, 1980 AND 1984

AGE GROUP IN YEARS	1980 Total %	1980 Male %	1980 Female %	1984 Total %	1984 Male %	1984 Female %
15 - 19	10.4	10.5	10.1	8.4	9.6	7.7
20 - 29	25.7	28.5	22.5	23.1	25.9	21.2
30 - 39	22.7	18.3	27.8	26.9	17.5	33.1
40 - 49	16.7	13.8	20.3	20.9	13.6	25.8
50 & over	24.5	28.9	19.3	20.7	33.5	12.3

(Source: Reports on the Labour Force Survey of Singapore 1980 and 1984)

6.7 Differentials in pay and other benefits between male and female employees in the Singapore labour market

6.7.1 Pay differentials

It was in 1961 under the Women's Charter that the Singapore Government endorsed parity in remuneration for women as part of its programme to raise the status of women.

The following year, women civil servants enjoyed wage parity with men. To date, twenty-three years later, no equal pay legislation has been passed by parliament. Wage differentials continue to be widely experienced by females in the private sector. Although the disparity is more evident among blue than white collar workers, in a study of university education and employment in 1966 and 1967 (35), it was found that even if male and female graduates from the local university were employed in the same occupational groups, a sizable income differential of between $200 to $300 per month existed between the sexes in all the groups.

In 1974, five years after the republic had started its industrialisation programme, over 50 per cent of females, particularly those in blue collar jobs were earning under $200 per month in comparison to 29.1% of males earning at this level (36). In 1974, while 2.2% of males earned well over $1,500 per month, only 0.3% females were in that category. However, in 1977 (37), while an improvement in female wages in all the categories of gross monthly income is evident, as reflected in Table 6.X below, at the same time, the percentages of women are lower than men's in all the categories.

TABLE 6.X

PERCENTAGE(1974)/CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGE(1977) DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYED PERSONS BY GROSS MONTHLY INCOME AND SEX

Monthly income in Singapore dollars	1974 Total %	1974 Male %	1974 Female %	1977 Total %	1977 Male %	1977 Female %
Under 200	37.8	29.1	56.2	-	-	-
200 - 399	37.0	41.8	26.8	75.0	82.0	60.2
400 - 599	11.9	13.9	7.7	32.8	39.5	18.4
600 - 799	4.1	4.8	2.6	16.6	20.0	9.3
800 - 999	1.9	2.4	0.9	10.6	13.1	5.2
1,000 - 1,499	2.8	3.7	0.9	7.6	9.7	3.1
1,500 & above	1.6	2.2	0.3	3.5	4.8	0.8

(Source: Reports of the Labour Force Survey of Singapore 1974 and 1977)

Against the background of widespread financial gains for female workers in the labour market in general in 1977, discriminatory practices still persisted in particular in the manufacturing and contruction sectors. The female general labourer in the garments industry, for example, was the lowest paid of the five listed daily-rated workers with a wage differential of 13.4% between male and female workers. The wage differential for the spinner in the textile industry was the widest, that is, 24.5% between the sexes as shown on Table 6.Y.

TABLE 6.Y

AVERAGE COMMENCING WAGE RATES OF SPECIFIC JOBS, 1977

OCCUPATION	Males' wages	Females' wages	Female % of Males' wages
Spinner (Textile Industry)	$ 7.21	$ 5.59	77.5
Weaver (Textile Industry)	7.21	5.63	78.1
Cutter (Garments Industry)	6.96	5.46	78.4
General Labourer (Garments Industry)	5.74	4.97	86.6
General Labourer (Construction Industry)	10.00	8.83	88.3

(Source: 4th. Quarter Sample Survey of Wages, EDB. 1977)

A stable government, the shift to advanced technology, a dedicated workforce and continued foreign investors' confidence in Singapore's economic future, further contributed to the republic's economic progress and development in the early 1980s. The world recessionary climate which affected the economies of western countries like the United States and the United Kingdom, for example, had comparatively little impact on Singapore. Up to 1984, it has continued to maintain an average 9% economic growth rate in the last four years. The tight labour market, despite the increase in higher female participation rate yearly as shown on Table 6.B, helped to boost the wages of both male and female workers. In 1979, a decade after the onset of industrialisation, the median gross monthly income of all workers stood as $347 but by 1984, it jumped to

$560, a substantial percentage increase of 61.4%. While the female percentage increase over the four year period matched that of the male figure, their gross monthly income still lagged behind that of the males by 27.3% in 1984. The disparity is illustrated in Table 6.Z below:

TABLE 6.Z

MEDIAN GROSS MONTHLY INCOME OF EMPLOYED PERSONS BY SEX, 1979 AND 1984

SEX	June 1979	June 1984	Change in %
All workers	$347	$613	76.7
Male	$386	$703	82.1
Female	$290	$511	76.2

(Source: Reports on the Labour Force Survey of Singapore 1979 and 1984)

Wage differentials between male and female workers permeated all industries and all occupations as shown on Table 6.AA. 34.8% of the total female workforce in 1984 was concentrated in the manufacturing industry and within this sector, 134,058 or 93.8% received gross monthly wages of below $1,000. Only 844 or 0.6% of females earned more than $3,000 per month. The male percentage in this wage category was 5.9% or 10,292 in number. We saw in Table 6.X, for which only percentages were available, that the monthly income of males outstripped females at every level from $200 a month upwards. In Table 6.AA for which actual numbers were available, this disparity was still maintained. The discrepancy is still maintained although men and women are

TABLE 6.AA

INCOME DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYED PERSONS 15 YEARS AND OVER IN ALL INDUSTRIES IN 1984

INDUSTRY	TOTAL NUMBER	UNDER $200	$200-599	$600-999	$1,000 1,999	$2,000-2,999	$3,000 and over
All Industries (Male)	740,419	36,618	262,456	217,832	138,134	41,228	44,151
ALL Industries (Female)	410,738	18,731	244,138	81,797	48,576	12,350	5,146
Manufacturing (Male)	177,921	1,667	66,607	56,686	33,222	9,447	10,292
Manufacturing (Female)	142,909	5,146	109,729	19,183	6,772	1,235	844

Source: Report on Labour Force Survey of Singapore,1984.

TABLE 6.AB

INCOME DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYED FEMALES 15 YEARS AND OVER BY SELECTED OCCUPATIONS,1984

MONTHLY INCOME/ OCCUPATION	TOTAL NUMBER	UNDER $200	$200-599	$600-999	$1,000-1,999	$2,000-2,999	$3,000- and over
1* (a)Male	72,268	206	3,478	11,321	28,426	14,449	14,388
(b)Female	46,806	947	7,348	10,065	18,278	7,739	2,429
2* (a)Male	57,839	41	515	3,746	17,886	13,626	22,024
(b)Female	12,103	0	144	1,009	6,381	2,490	2,079
3* (a)Male	63,808	1,153	22,580	25,152	13,688	947	288
(b)Female	130,127	535	63,767	47,733	16,899	1,112	82
4* (a)Male	63,993	2,861	32,954	16,858	9,653	1,152	515
(b)Female	64,631	9,221	46,991	5,578	2,532	185	123
5* (a)Male	322,827	5,743	147,746	124,117	40,179	3,519	1,523
(b)Female	114,607	5,352	97,790	9,921	1,461	83	0

KEY

1* = Professional,Technical & related workers;
2* = Administrative,Managerial & Executive workers;
3* = Clerical and related workers;
4* = Service workers;
5* = Production & related workers, Transport Equipment operators and labourers.

Source: Report on the Labour Force Survey of Singapore,1984.

N.B.: For a further breakdown ,for example, of selected occupations within categories 3, 4 and 5, See Tables 6.D(1), 6.D(2) and 6.D(4).

earning more.

Production and related workers who featured prominently in the manufacturing sector had the highest number of females, that is, 114,607 or 27.9% of the total female labour force, as shown on Table 6.AB. 113,063 or 98.7% of females in this category earned below $1,000 gross monthly wages. Only 1,544 or 1.3% of the total number of female workers in this job category received monthly salaries of $1,000 and over. In the other occupations, males generally outnumbered females in the higher wage scales. Except for the administrative, clerical and production sectors where the number of females receiving $200 and under per month gross wages were lower, all the other categories revealed that male workers dominated in higher earnings than females generally.

6.7.2 Differentials in medical and other fringe benefits

While pay differentials had been a major feature of discrimination against women in the labour market before and after industrialisation, it was not the only overtly unfavourable aspect of the treatment against working women in existence. Inequality existed either in the form of access discrimination or treatment discrimination (1h). Wong (1h) refers to access discrimination as discrimination in educational and training opportunities, discriminatory recruitment and limited range of jobs open to women while differential career and advancement opportunities, unfavourable terms of contract and tenure, differential

remuneration and lesser supervisory responsibilities delegated to women, are seen as treatment discrimination. The lower number (10,974) and percentage (17.6%) of females of the total workforce and the rate of one female to five males in the category of administrative, managerial and executive workers (See Table 6.AB above), confirms the discriminatory practice among industries of showing preference for the selection and appointment of males over females for these posts. On-the-job training courses, BEST and other technical and vocational courses are available to workers in most industries but more males than females were often selected to attend these courses to upgrade their skills. Of a total of 8,623 intake of trainees sponsored by various industries for courses run by the VITB for 1982, for example, only 1,336 or 15% were females (See Appendix 6.A).

A most striking disparity between male and female workers in the Singapore context exists in the granting of medical and other fringe benefits by most major industries in the private sector and by the public sector as well. In the case of the married male employees, medical attention which includes consultation, medication and hospitalisation are available to themselves, their spouses and immediate family. For the single male, single female and married woman, these privileges are only available to themselves. Married women suffer from a number of 'population disincentives' which were introduced in 1969/70 and further intensified from 1972 as part of the government's population

control measures. Paid maternity leave, normally two months for civil servants, is applicable only up to the first two children. The birth of a third or subsequent child not only meant unpaid maternity leave but also escalating delivery fees in government hospitals. Both working and non-working women are also required to pay a fee of $10 per ante-natal check-up at government clinics. Married women in the government service, enjoy paid medical leave should they undergo sterilisation after having two or more children. Other disincentives include income-tax relief which is limited to only the first three children, the abolishing of priority to large families in the allocation of subsidised government housing and the ineligibility to sublet rooms in their HDB flats.

Within both the public and private sectors, fringe benefits for top executives and management staff, in the form of holiday packages abroad, normally tenable after a period of five to fifteen years of devoted service, depending on the organisation, are eligible to the individual only in the case of single men and women and married women. As for the married man, free air/sea tickets are issued to him, his wife and children plus extra allowances for every member that accompanies him on the trip. As an associate professor, one of a handful of Singapore women who has managed to hold one of the top posts in the local university, Professor Hua Mulan (one of the seven female participants in the author's oral history interviews), was subject to this unfair treatment. Not only

do her male colleagues enjoy the privilege of being given free tickets for their spouses to accompany them on sabbatical or on official trips, their medical benefits also extend to their spouses and children while a single or married woman enjoys this privilege only for herself.

6.8. Conclusion

In the pre-industrial period of the 19th century right through to the first half of the 20th century, women of the three major ethnic groups have been the object of subjugation and discrimination in family life and in opportunities for educational attainment and advancement which have restricted them to female-oriented occupations. The traditional ideology of males in the role of sole breadwinners was generally agreed upon by all the 11 participants in the author's oral history interviews (See Chapter 8, Section 8.7). Although large numbers of women, both single and married, were drawn into the labour force from 1970 onwards, in response to Singapore's rapid industrialisation programme, nevertheless, like their predecessors generations before them, they were concentrated in sex-stereotyped jobs where their manual dexterity was exploited to the full by the manufacturing sector in particular. Typical 'woman's work' and a cross section of the unequal distribution of professional men and women both in the United Kingdom and in Singapore today, are given in Appendices 6.B and 6.C. As production and related workers,

women were confined to low-skilled jobs where they received lower wages than their male counterparts. Wage disparity between employed males and females extended right across all the selected occupations in all industries in the labour market before and after industrialisation. The inequalities of wage differentials were further exacerbated by the system of fringe benefits which not only treat women unequally but also constitute them as dependants of men.

The highest concentration of female participation had been in the 20 - 24 age group for single females and 25 - 29 age group for married females in 1974 and 1984 respectively, as shown in Table 6.M. Single females normally continued full-time employment until they reached their retirement age of 60. Married women, however, often experienced role conflict and role strains. While shared-roles have become more common, in theory at any rate, in most Western societies, resulting in higher participation rates among married women, in Singapore, married women in general, continue to bear the brunt of housework and childrearing. Coupled with inadequate childcare facilities provided by the state and individual organisations, married women were often compelled to withdraw from full-time employment after marriage and children. Those who continued working suffered guilt feelings to a lesser or greater degree (34). But the need to help subsidise family incomes have led a number of married women to re-enter the labour market as part-timers. The crux of the problem here appears to lie in the male self-image which shuns their

participation in household chores. Generally, Asian boys have not been adequately trained by their mothers to assist in the kitchen. Home Economics is a subject confined only to secondary girls. It would appear that a logical solution to shared-roles by future husbands and fathers would be the initiation of secondary boys to Cookery and Home management courses. If women in general, in future, are to enjoy greater freedom in family life and in employment, than a change in cultural attitudes in this area is highly desirable.

An exploration of the various patterns of employment in the Singapore labour market has revealed that discriminatory practices are rife in many areas. Not only do wage differentials and unequal medical and other fringe benefits exist between male and female workers, but the former have been generally favoured in access discrimination in education and training opportunities. The disadvantaged position of the three major ethnic groups of Singapore women is reflected in their generally poor academic attainments and qualifications. This calls for a change in particular in the school curriculum where all secondary girls should be placed on parity with secondary boys and be given the same opportunity to have two years of Technical Education which will better prepare them for future job advancement. A more scientific and technological school programme for girls will enhance their transition into the era of advanced technology that Singapore has embarked upon in the last five years.

Unless the present and future generations of Singapore females are exposed to a more equitable educational and training programme, they too may end up in sex-typed jobs which will eventually become obsolete and culminate in their eventual compulsory mass elimination from the labour market.

While education provides the passport to a better equality of life and better prospects in employment, it is also the training ground for social and cultural development and national integration in a multi-racial society like Singapore. Traditional ideology has relegated Singapore women to an unequal status at home, in society and in employment. Part of this ideology is made up of the attitudes which prevail in the educational system. These attitudes will be the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7

SEX-ROLE STEREOTYPING AND DISCRIMINATION IN THE SINGAPORE EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENT TODAY - MYTH OR REALITY?

7.1 Introduction

In the last decade in particular, Western countries, for example, the United States and Sweden, have forged ahead with legislation to discourage the practice of discrimination between the sexes and sex-role stereotyping in many areas of education. America's Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (1) prohibits, for example, sex discrimination in such areas as admissions to vocational, graduate, professional and public undergraduate schools; access to courses and programmes; vocational educational programmes; student rules and policies; student housing; financial assistance; counselling and guidance; physical education and athletics; extra-curricular activities and employment in educational institutions. To provide educational equity for women and reduce sex-role stereotyping in education, programmes which cover such areas as the development and evaluation of curricula, textbooks and other educational materials, model pre-service and in-service training programmes for educational personnel, and educational activities to increase opportunities for adult women, are carried out in the United States under legislation known as the Women's Educational Equity Act of 1976 (2).

In the United Kingdom, in conjunction with International Women's Year in 1975, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 was passed by Parliament. Under the provisions of this Act, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) was given the power to investigate possible areas of discrimination in employment and training (3). It should be pointed out, however, that despite these apparent powers, the EOC's recommendations arising from such investigations and monitoring are not binding in law although, as Hewitt (4) points out, they could be useful as a way of bringing pressure on an organisation or institution. In Sweden, the Swedish National Board of Education's Sex Role Project aims at studying from different standpoints, all aspects of schools and teaching causing sex differentiation and pinpointing current deficiencies as well as developmental possibilities (5).

In the early 1960s, the Indian Government, recognising the "fundamental and basic equality between men and women", envisaged an educational system that would provide the basis for a new society where "the biological fact of sex will play a minor role" and where an individual would not be forced "to conform to a predetermined pattern of behaviour on the basis of his/her sex" (Education Commission, India (6), p.4). The Indian Education Commission further stresses the importance of eradicating all traditional concepts of female inferiority:

> ..it is unscientific to divide tasks and subjects on the basis of sex and to regard some of them as

> 'masculine' and others as 'feminine'. Similarly, the fact that the so-called psychological differences between the two sexes arise, not out of sex but out of social conditioning, will have to be widely publicized and people will have to be made to realise that stereotypes of 'masculine' and 'feminine' personalities do more harm than good.
>
> (Education Commission, India (6), p.5)

The consequent result of the recommendations of the Education Commission (1964-66) was the establishment of a National Board of School Textbooks in 1969 and the National Council of Educational Research and Training in 1971 which was entrusted with the task of developing guidelines in Indian school textbooks for all the states (7).

In Singapore, however, there is no legislation on sex discrimination in employment or education nor are there any programmes geared to discourage or eliminate sexism in education. In the West, extensive studies have been carried out on sexism in education. In America, investigation into sex inequities and sex-roles in education were carried out by Astin et al (8), Saario et al (9) and Stockard (10) to name a few, while observational studies of classroom interactions by Felsenthal (11), Meyer and Thompson (12), Sears and Feldman (13), Serbin et al (14) and Spaulding (15) reveal the different behaviours and attitudes of teachers towards the male and female pupils they teach. Across the Atlantic, a prolific number of studies on various aspects of sexism in education were also carried out. The school is seen as "a sexist amplifier" (16) by Byrne (3), Marland (17), Spender (18) and Sutherland (19); sexism in the

secondary school curriculum is exposed by Rose (20), Samuel (21), Turnbull et al (22) and Whyld (23); the effects of the hidden curriculum on both male and female pupils were highlighted by Dale (24), Davis and Meighan (25), Ricks and Pyke (26) and Rosenthal and Jacobson (27) and sexism in textbooks was looked into by Hahn (28), Lobban (29), Moon (30) and by the study commissioned by the Educational Publishers Council and EOC in 1981 (31).

In the Asian region, Kalia (6), has carried out a study of sexism in Indian education with particular investigation into sexism and sex-roles in Indian school textbooks published in pre and post independence periods. Some examples of favourable images assigned to male and female characters by the authors of the textbooks Kalia investigated, are given in Appendix 7.A. In Singapore, only Ho (32), Ong (33) and Wong (34) have made comparative studies of the academic achievements of males and females in higher education. To date, no studies have been carried out by Singapore writers on sexism in education.

From the dawn of self-government in 1959, legislation like the Women's Charter of 1961, has elevated Singapore women to the status of equality with men. Women enjoy rights to franchise and participation in politics and most forms of employment are open to them, yet inequalities still exist (See Chapters 5 and 6). In education, for example, female enrolment in primary and secondary schools has been on the increase yearly (See Table 5.F) yet, yearly,

50 per cent of secondary girl pupils continue to be denied the privilege of being taught Technical Education while it is a compulsory subject for all Secondary One and Two boy pupils (See Chapter 3). In fact, starting from 2 January 1986, when the new school year begins, all secondary girl pupils will be taught Home Management and Childcare to better prepare them for their future roles as wives and homemakers (35). Female enrolment in tertiary institutions like the university have also risen substantially in the last two decades (See Tables 5.G and 5.H) but the majority of female students are concentrated in the Arts anmd Social Sciences. In 1984, female teachers outnumber male teachers in the ratio 3:1 with 12,070 female to 6,739 male teachers, yet, of the total 402 government and government-aided primary and secondary schools and junior colleges in 1984, 298, or 74.1%, of the principals are males (See Tables 7.C and 7.D).

In this chapter, therefore, an attempt eill be made to investigate whether sex discrimination and sex-role stereotyping are present in the Singapore educational system. Sex-role stereotyping has been found to be responsible for the confining of females to a limited number of occupations in the labour market, occupations which not only restrict their upward mobility but also their chances of wage parity with men (See Chapter 6). It is possible then that the roots of sex-role stereotyping are to be found in the educational system which generations of past men and women have experienced and which future generations will

experience, as part of the process of their growth and development. Five areas will be explored namely: the structure of the Ministry of Education (MOE); classroom observations with particular reference to teacher-pupil interactions and interviews; pupils' perceptions of sexism; the curriculum; and, finally, learning materials used in schools.

7.2 Structure of the Singapore Ministry of Education

7.2.1 Staff at Headquarters

It was in 1955, four years before Singapore was granted internal self-government that a full Minister, locally-elected, was appointed to head the MOE. Prior to that year, education was the responsibility of the British Government with the Director of Education overseeing the organisation and administration of all government schools in the colony. Self-government in 1959 saw the gradual integration of all government, mission and private schools under the umbrella of the MOE.

Today, the elected Minister for Education is assisted by a Minister of State for Education, a Permanent Secretary who is the Civil Service head of administration and the Director of Education who attends to professional affairs (See Chapter 3, Figure 3.4). In the last year, since the post of Director of Education has become vacant, the Permanent Secretary also acts as the Director of Education. All the three figures in the top hierarchy of

the organisation are men. They formulate directives or execute policies laid down by the political body of the government, oversee the smooth-running of all schools and colleges under the ministry's control, monitor the progress of all pupils and the welfare and development of all teaching and non-teaching staffs.

Following below them are 250 Divisional Directors, Deputy Directors, Assistant Directors and Specialist Inspectors stationed at the establishment's headquarters. Table 7.A shows the breakdown of thsi core of top officials in the MOE who keep the administrative machinery running effectively and efficiently.

The data in Table 7.A reveals that among the top echelon of officers at headquarters, males outnumber females by 16 per cent. Besides, in each of the four categpories listed on the table, male officers outnumber female officers, the greatest disparities being in the categories of Directors and Assistant Directors. In the former, the ratio of males to females is 3:1 while in the latter, the ratio is almost 5:1. It is only in the category of Deputy Director that the disparity is narrowest with 7 male to 6 female Deputy Directors. This is indeed an encouraging sign for all Singapore women, especially those associated with the Education Service, who should note that the capabilities and high standard of efficiency of some members of their sex have received due recognition and reward from the

TABLE 7.A

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF AT MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

HEADQUARTERS BY STATUS, 1984

DIVISIONS/ BRANCHES	Director		Deputy Director		Assistant Director		Heads/Exec. Officers/ Inspectors	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
General Admin. Branch	1				1		5	2
Finance/Acc. Branch			1		1	1	2	3
Personnel Division	1			1	1		2	3
Staff Development/Placement Branch			1		3		3	6
Training Branch			1		2		1	3
Secretariat Unit							1	
Lang. Proficiency Centre	1							
Education Services Division	1							
Textbooks/ Library Branch				1	1	1		
Pupil Services Branch					2		2	16
Curriculum Branch				1	2			
Planning/Management Services Division		1	1		1	1	1	4
Computer Services Branch			1		2	1	16	8
Gifted Education Unit		1		1				7
CDIS	1			1				
Schools Division	1		1	1	4		61	37
ECA Branch			1		3	1	15	3
Total	6	2	7	6	23	5	109	92
Percentage	75.0	25.0	53.8	46.2	82.1	17.9	54.2	45.8

Overall Total = 250
Male Total = 145 Male Percentage = 58.0
Female Total = 105 Female Percentage = 42.0

(Source: MOE, 1984)

government. All top officers under discussion here have high academic qualifications, the minimum being a Bachelor's degree from the university.

As stated in the introduction, female teachers make up two-third of the total population of teachers in Singapore. Table 7.A has shown that Specialist Inspectors who are responsible for the professional progress and development of all teachers, are largely males, as the figures in the Schools Division sector reveal. Altogether there are 7 top officers in this division: 1 Director, 2 Deputy Directors and 4 Assistant Directors and of this number, only one is a female. Of the total of 98 Area Inspectors, the number of males is almost double that of females. Even in the Extra-Curricular Activities (ECA) Branch, the ratio of male to female directors, that is, Deputy and Assistant Directors is 4:1 while that of Specialist Inspectors is 5:1.

The large number of male executive officers in the Computer Services Branch reflects the advantage that males have taken of the advent of advanced technology. The one sector where females are in complete control is the Gifted Education Unit where all the members are females. This unit, which was only started at the beginning of 1984, is a pilot project reponsible for monitoring the progress of outstanding pupils, both boys and girls, initially in the primary schools.

Although successive reports from the Labour

Force Survey of Singapore 1957 to 1984 and the Census of Population 1970 (See Table 6.B) have shown a distinct increase in the number of females in employment, the majority are concentrated in labour-intensive and partly skilled jobs with low pay, for example, in the Manufacturing and Commerce sectors (See Tables 6.F and 6.H). An investigation now into the proportion of male to female non-teaching staff and their divisional status (36) in the establishment, would further establish whether females in this organisation are similarly concentrated in the lower strata of the workforce. Table 7.B below gives the breakdown of the totaworkforce of 721 staff at MOE headquarters by divisional status:

TABLE 7.B

STRENGTH OF NON-TEACHING STAFF AT MOE HEADQUARTERS BY DIVISIONAL STATUS AS ON 31 AUGUST 1984

Divisional Status	Total No.	Male No.	Female No.	Female % of Total
I	27	15	12	44.4
II	99	35	64	64.6
III	415	95	320	77.1
IV	180	74	106	58.9
Total	721	219	502	69.6

(Source: MOE, Singapore. 1984)

Except for the highest division, that is, Division I where 55.6% are males, the remaining three divisions show a greater concentration of female staff. Their numbers are biggest in the lowest rungs, that is, Division III and IV

where. for example, in Division III, they are manily clerks or shorthand writers or in Division IV, as office sttendants or typists as Tables 7.B(1) and 7.B(2) reveal:

TABLE 7.B(1)

DIVISION III NON-TEACHING FEMALE STAFF AT MOE HEADQUARTERS BY JOBS, AS ON 31 AUGUST 1984

Types of jobs	Number
Clerk	284
Technician	2
Graphic artist	8
Librarian technician	6
Script assistant	3
Shorthand writer	17
Total	320

(Source: MOE, Singapore. 1984)

TABLE 7.B(2)

DIVISION IV NON-TEACHING FEMALE STAFF AT MOE HEADQUARTERS BY JOBS, AS ON 31 AUGUST 1984

Types of jobs	Number
Office attendant	36
Record keeping	5
Telephone operator	5
Typing	60
Total	106

(Source: MOE, Singapore. 1984)

7.2.2 Staff in Government and Government-aided schools and junior colleges

As explained in Chapter 3, Section 3.2.2, all the different and diverse types of schools in Singapore came

under centralised government control as recommended by the 1955 All-Party Committee. Mission and ethnic established schools, though under ministry supervision, continue to be known as governments-aided schools. Thus their number is included in the total count of staff of the educational establishment.

According to the 1984 figures (37), there are altogether 18,809 primary, secondary and junior college teachers. Table 7.C below shows the breakdown and proportion of male vis-a-vis female teachers:

TABLE 7.C

TEACHERS IN THE SINGAPORE EDUCATION SERVICE BY STATUS, AS ON 30 JUNE 1984

Status of Teachers	Total No.	Male No.	Female No.	Female % of Total
Primary	10,653	3,272	7,381	69.3
Secondary	7,281	3,136	4,145	56.9
Junior college	875	331	544	62.2
Total	18,809	6,739	12,070	64.2

(Source* MOE, Singapore. 1984)

In the three stages, females outnumber males, with a ratio of 3 females to 1 male teacher in the primary schools. To date, all primary teachers and Principals in Singapore are hoders of only Certificates in Education. Owing to the shortage of university graduates to fill up the many vacant posts in secondary schools, a large number of secondary teachers who generally teach the lower forms are

also non-university graduates. They number 1,967 (37) so together with 7,381 attached to primary schools, they make up 9,348 or 49.7% of the toatl number in the Education Service.

Moving to the area of Head and Managers of schools and junior colleges, Table 7.D below shows the proportion of male to female Principalsa in 1984:

TABLE 7.D

PRINCIPALS OF GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNMENT-AIDED PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND JUNIOR COLLEGES BY SEX, AS ON 31 AUGUST 1984

Types of school	Total No.	GOVERNMENT Male No.	Female No.	Female % of Total	GOVERNMENT-AIDED Male No.	Female No.	Female % of Total
Primary	256	149	40	21.2	51	16	23.9
Secondary	117	62	26	29.5	18	11	37.9
Full school (Primary & Secondary)	18	1	0	0.0	7	10	58.8
Junior college	11	5	1	16.7	5	0	0.0
Total	402	217	67	23.6	81	37	31.4

(Source: MOE, Singapore. 1984)

Except for the full school category in the government-aided sector where the percentage of male Principals is lower, that is, 41.2% to 58.8% for female Principals, all the other categories show that male Heads outnumber female Heads by over 70 per cent in the government sector and by over 60 per cent in the government-aided sector. The greatest disparity is evident in the primary schools in both sectors where male Principals outnumber

female Principals by over 75 per cent. As Table 7.C ealier has shown, almost 70 per cent of the primary teachers in all government and government-aided schools are females, yet, only 56 or 13.9% of the total number of Principals are females.

While male Principals outnumber female Principals in all but one category as Table 7.D above reveals, it would be interesting to find out the proportion in the case of those second in command, that is, the Vice-Principals of all schools in Singapore. Table 7.E gives the breakdown of their figures.

TABLE 7.E

VICE-PRINCIPALS OF GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNMENT-AIDED PRIMARY AND SECONDAY SCHOOLS AND JUNIOR COLLEGES BY SEX, AS ON 31 AUGUST 1984

Types of school	Total No.	GOVERNMENT Male No.	GOVERNMENT Female No.	GOVERNMENT Female % of Total	GOVERNMENT-AIDED Male No.	GOVERNMENT-AIDED Female No.	GOVERNMENT-AIDED Female % of Total
Primary	144	85	29	25.4	20	10	33.3
Secondary	55	25	17	40.5	9	4	30.8
Full schools	12	1	0	0.0	5	6	54.5
Junior colleges	10	3	2	40.0	3	2	40.0
Total	221	114	48	29.6	37	22	37.3

(Source: MOE, Singapore. 1984)

As in Table 7.D, again it is the same category, that is, the full schools in the government-aided sector that female Vice-Principals outnumber male Vice-Principals. Although the other 7 categories in both government and government-aided sectors show more males than females

holding the post of Vice-Principals, generally there is an increase in the percentage of female Vice-Principals in 6 categories as shown in Table 7.E compared to the percentage of female Principals in Table 7.D in the same categories, namely, government primary, secondary and junior colleges and government-aided primary, secondary and junior colleges.

The concept of appointing heads of subject departments was introduced at the beginning of 1984. No oficial records are available of the breakdown of this group of teachers according to the types of schools since the MOE has not completed its selection of such personnel at the time of the author's retrieval of the data. However, preliminary figures offered by the Personnel Division show a total of 794 heads of department. Table 7.F gives the breakdown of this total by sex:

TABLE 7.F

HEADS OF SUBJECT DEPARTMENTS OF GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNMENT-AIDED SCHOOLS AND JUNIOR COLLEGES BY SEX, AS ON 31 AUGUST 1984

Total No.	Male No.	Female No.	Female % of Total
794	423	371	46.7

(Source: MOE, Singapore. 1984)

The figures in the above table represent the first group of newly appointed heads of department who were selected to attend a course on the roles of heads of departments, organised by the MOE. Here again, males outnumber females by 53.3% to 46.7%. Neither is there any

data available of the breakdown of this group into the subjects they head. However, it can be assumed that subjects like Mathematics, Physics and Physical Science, which are normally taught by males, would have higher percentages of male heads of department while subjects like English, History, Geography and Home Economics, which are gnerally taught by female university graduates in the upper forms and female non-university graduates in the lower forms, would have higher percentages of female heads of department in these subject areas.

No organisation can function effectively and efficiently without its support force of ancillary, subordinate staff such as general clerks to keep records and accounts, secretaries or typists to attend to correspondence and attendants to run errands and maintain the premises in good order. The MOE has altogether a large force of 3,625 such non-teaching ancillary staff in its establishment. Table 7.G below gives the breakdown of these members in government and government-aided schools and colleges according to their divisional status:

TABLE 7.G

NON-TEACHING ANCILLARY STAFF IN GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNMENT-AIDED SCHOOLS AND JUNIOR COLLEGES BY DIVISIONAL STATUS, AS ON 31 AUGUST 1984

Divisional Status	Total No.	GOVERNMENT Male No.	GOVERNMENT Female No.	GOVERNMENT Female % of Total	GOVERNMENT-AIDED Male No.	GOVERNMENT-AIDED Female No.	GOVERNMENT-AIDED Female % of Total
I	7	0	6	100.0	0	1	100.0
II	11	1	1	50.0	0	9	100.0
III	952	153	532	77.7	51	216	80.9
IV	2,655	653	1,356	67.5	203	443	68.6
Total	3,625	807	1,895	70.1	254	669	72.5

(Source: MOE, Singapore. 1984)

As Table 7.G above has revealed, the top 7 Division I officers are all females. However, they are not purely administrators but are all library officers. As for the 10 female offiecers in Division II, they too are library officers. Again, as with the non-teaching staff at MOE headquarters, the heaviest concentrations of female staff are in Divisions III and IV where a ratio of 3 female to 1 male officer prevails.

Table 7.G(1) shows the types of jobs of the personnel who belong to Division III of the non-teaching ancillary staff in schools and junior colleges:

TABLE 7.G(1)

DIVISION III NON-TEACHING ANCILLARY STAFF IN GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNMENT-AIDED SCHOOLS AND JUNIOR COLLEGES NY JOBS, AS ON 31 AUGUST 1984

Types of jobs	Total No.	GOVERNMENT Male No.	GOVERNMENT Female No.	GOVERNMENT Female % of Total	GOVENMENT-AIDED Male No.	GOVENMENT-AIDED Female No.	GOVENMENT-AIDED Female % of Total
Clerk	599	22	410	94.9	10	157	94.0
Technician	15	8	2	20.0	5	0	0.0
Laboratory technician	217	36	105	74.5	23	53	69.7
Workshop instructor	111	87	10	10.3	12	2	14.3
Computer key-punch operator	10	0	5	100.0	0	5	100.0
Total	952	153	532	77.7	50	217	81.3

(Source: MOE, Singapore. 1984)

It is only in the categories of technician and workshop instructor that males outnumber females by over 80 per cent. Elsewhere, females dominate in traditionally female-oriented jobs such as clerk (over 94%) and computer key-punch operator (100.0%). The job of laboratory technician had been the reserve of males for decades but, lately, a swing to females is becoming the trend. In the report of the Census of Population 1970 (38) and the Labour Force Surveys of 1977 (39) and 1984 (40), however, male technician workers and technicians generally outnumber their female counterparts by a ratio of 3 males to 1 female.

How then do female workers feature in Division IV of the non-teaching ancillary staff? As table 7.G(2) below reveals, female workers outnumber males in all the 5

categories listed. Except for the first category of school attendant where the ratio of 3 females to 1 male is prevalent, in the second category of laboratory attendant, the ratio is 4 females to 1 male and in the third category of office attendant, the ratio is even wider, that is, approximately 18 females to 1 male worker. No males are employed as typists or library attendants, the traditional female-oriented jobs.

TABLE 7.G(2)

DIVISION IV NON-TEACHING ANCILLARY STAFF IN GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNMENT-AIDED SCHOOLS AND JUNIOR COLLEGES BY JOBS, AS ON 31 AUGUST 1984

Types of jobs	Total No.	GOVERNMENT			GOVERNMENT-AIDED		
		Male No.	Female No.	Female % of Total	Male No.	Female No.	Female % of Total
School attendant	1,961	596	910	60.4	182	273	60.0
Laboratory attendant	287	42	164	79.6	16	65	80.2
Office attendant	383	15	269	94.7	5	94	94.9
Typist	11	0	6	100.0	0	5	100.0
Library attendant	13	0	7	100.0	0	6	100.0
Total	2,655	653	1,356	67.5	203	443	68.6

(Source: MOE, Singapore. 1984)

All the data and statistics covered above reveal a similar pattern throughout the educational establishment, that is, the concentration of female workers in the lower rungs of the employment strata. At the same time, the large numbers of female staff at MOE headquarters and in the schools are employed in low-paying, semi-skilled or unskilled jobs which do not require advanced technical

knowledge or skills or tertiary qualifications. For posts where educational and other academic qualifications are the criteria as in the posts of Directors, Deputy and Assistant Directors, Subject Specialist Inspectors or Principals of secondary schools and junior colleges where the incumbents are all holders of university degrees, males generally dominate. Thus, within the organisational set-up of educational establishment, there exists an overt, disproportionate and consistent disparity of male to female staff in the top positions throughout the organisation.

7.3 Classroom observations with particular reference to teacher-pupil interaction and interviews

7.3.1 Factors that determined the author's choice of research methodology in classroom observations

Attempts to measure classroom behaviour dates as far back as 1904 when Horn (41) experimented with the use of a small circle to be recorded by the observer in the appropriate space on a seat chart for "each recitation or request for recitation" and a space for each time a pupil responds by doing something. This method was further developed by Puckett in 1928 (42). He introduced 14 symbols which were recorded in squares on a conventional seating plan to indicate which pupil exhibited the behaviour. Each mark, for example, a dot, a circle or a dash made, referred to a single behaviour or aspect of behaviour by the pupil. When one or more hands of pupils go up, for example, one or

more dots are recorded and when a pupil was called on, the dot was encircled if the hand was up. A square was recorded in the case where a pupil was called on when he did not have his hand raised. Since Puckett, other attempts at measuring classroom behaviour have been made, for example in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s by such researchers as Wrightstone (43), Anderson et al (44), Morsh (45) and Hughes (46). However, the most sophisticated research technique whereby an observer uses a set of pre-determined categories to 'code' or classify the behaviour of teachers and pupils was developed by Flanders in 1960 (47). Soon a number of American researchers, Amidon and Hough (48), La Shier (49), Furst (50) and Soar (51), for example, adopted the Flanders Interactional Analysis Categories (FIAC) in its original or modified forms in their investigations into classroom behaviour. Across the Atlantic, Delamont (52) and Reid (53) applied the FIAC technique in their research into teacher-pupil interaction in their academic exercises. However, research into classroom interaction, as far as the author is aware, is in its infancy in Singapore. No Singapore version of, for example, the FIAC technique has been developed nor has the American model been adopted within Singapore.

The selection of a model geared to the sphere of one's investiagtion, entails a number of considerations predominant among them being the apporpriateness of the model, to the particular educational setting and financial and other resources, for example, the accessibility of equipment such as video-tape recorders, to carry out

classroom research for a prolonged period. Other factors to be taken into consideration concern the attitudes of the governing authority, the Principals, teachers and pupils to the technique and instruments to be used for the observations. With respect to the observations that make up the bulk of this chapter, the author decided against adopting the FIAC model since it is not known in Singapore and its use might have caused problems and misunderstandings.

Interaction analysis contains, moreover, a number of severe biases and limitations when it is used as a research tool (54) within the cultural setting for which it is specifically designed. Simon and Boyer (55) had painstakingly detailed seventy-nine different observational systems tried out in the United States. These various systems cover slightly different kinds of small-scale units often fragmentary elements of classroom behaviour like providing the observer with a checklist of events to look out for (for example, 'Pupil talks with visitor'), others contain lists of pre-specified categories (for example, 'Teacher asks question' or 'Pupil answers'). Most of the widely-used systems are reliable having been experimented with for long periods, are generally easy to adopt, and can be used to study large numbers of classrooms and generate a wealth of numerical data suitable for statistical analysis (54). However, Delamont and Hamilton (54) argue that all but ten of the interaction analysis systems ignore the

temporal and spatial context in which the data are collected. Since most systems used data gathered during very short periods of observation (that is, measured in minutes and single lessons rather than hours or days), they claim that the observer makes no record of the physical setting of the school or classroom in which the observation is carried out. Thus, divorced from their social and temporal (or historical) context in this way, the data collected may, as Delamont and Hamilton assert and Baumgart (56) and Berliner (57) also stress in their studies, gloss over certain aspects relevant to their interpretation. All these authors also discount interaction analysis systems on the following grounds: as being involved solely with overt, observable behaviour, concentrating on surface features while ignoring underlying, but possibly more meaningful, features; being expressly concerned with what Simon and Boyer (55) term firstly, "what can be categorized or measured" and secondly, "small bits of action or behaviour rather than global concepts" (Simon and Boyer (55), p.1); utilizing pre-specified categories thus rendering the explanations, the category systems are intended to assist explanation, "tautological", and finally, "by placing arbitrary (and little understood) boundaries on continuous phenomena, category systems may create an initial bias from which it is extremely difficult to escape" (Delamont and Hamilton (54), p.9).

Owing to these reservations about the Flanders approach and bearing in mind the diverse ethnic and

historical settings of the 8 schools and junior colleges in which the author has carried out her observations, an adoption of the 'anthropological' classroom research method, combining history and ethnography, was adopted to describe her observations. As Hammersley points out:

> Not only are history and ethnography complementary but they share much in common. For example, they both display a primary concern with describing social events and procesed in detail, and a distaste for theories which, as they see it, ride roughshod over the complexity of the social world. Often too they share a commitment to documenting 'in their own terms' the perspectives of the people involved in the events and settings they describe.
>
> (Hammersley (58), p.15)

In arguing his case for a contemporary history of education, Stenhouse (59) stresses that contemporary history is explicitly concerned with generalisation and that this type of history may be characterised as a survey of an institution or activity within a timespan.

> A contemporary history can select a period which contains the present moment but is not teminated by it. Thus the present will yield relevant data for our study when it has become past. Likewise, the future up to the end of our period will be open to our study as a past that is yet to come. The close of our period has to be kept provisional: we cannot finally know what is the most defensible end of the period, though we can select topics in which the present is judged not to be such an end: the comprenhensive school and mixed ability teaching continue into the future.
>
> (Stenhouse (59), p.27)

Historically, the term 'ethnography' has referred to the set of field-research methods used by anthropologists in the scientific study of primitive, non-literate cultures

(60). However, in professional education, as in the disciplines of anthropology and sociology, Smith (61) notes that adaptations, extensions, and new syntheses have arisen in response to an ever changing agenda of problems, cross-disciplinary efforts and realignments of research communities. Smith further asserts that the concept of ethnography as used in education "is evolving rapidly" at the present moment (Smith (61), p.587). A list of recent variants of ethnography among eduational researchers is given in Appendix 7.B.

Both interaction analysis and anthropological classroom research begins with description, but interaction analysis operates within a limited scope, being governed by pre-determined descriptive categories. Anthropological research, however, not only allows and encourages the development of new categories but "can freely go beyond the status quo and develop new and potentially fetile descriptive languages" (Delamont and Hamilton (54), p.13).

Unlike interaction analysis which is generally concerned with generating normative data, in extrapolating from sample to population whereby statistical norms such as pupil-talk percentages apply to the population taken as a whole, ethnographic classroom research pays attention to individual members in the classroom. Since individual settings are never equivalent, statistical generalizations arrived at by interaction analysis, may not always be relevant or useful.

With anthropological research, the researcher makes no attempt to control, manipulate or eliminate variables (54). The 'anthropologist', Delamont and Hamilton (54) further claim, uses a holistic framework whereby she accepts as given the complex scene she encounters and takes this totality as her data base. She begins with an overview of the situation, then narrows her perceptions and gradually and systematically, concentrates on those classroom features or areas she considers to be most relevant to her research.

Methodologically, 'anthropological' classroom studies are based on participant observation during which the observer immerses herself in the 'new culture'. These studies mean the presence of an observer or observers in an single or a small number of classrooms for specified periods during which the observer not only observes but also talks with participants. Gussow (62), in supporting the participating role of the observer states:

> When the observers are physically present and approachable, the concept of the observer as non-participant though sociologically correct, is psychologically misleading.
>
> (Gussow (62), p.240)

Vidich (63) further substantiates this view in his statement:

> Whether the field-worker is totally, partially or not at all disguised, the respondent forms an image of him and sees that image as a basis of response. Without such an image, the relationship between the fieldworker and the respondent by definition doeas not exist.
>
> (Vidich (63), p.35)

So besides compiling field notes and field recordings the researcher may conduct formal interviews with the participants and ask them to complete questionnaires, as part of the anthropological research process. Thus, the data of the anthropological researcher are relatively unsystematic anmd open-ended.

The unrestricted sphere within which one can operate in anthropological research methodology has prompted the author to adopt this approach in her classroom observations. Classroom observations were carried out in 8 schools: 2 kindergartens, 2 primary and 2 secondary schools and 2 junior colleges. Systematic accounts of what transpired in these schools will follow.

7.3.2 How the observations were carried out

Unlike government and government-aided primary and secondary schools and junior colleges whcih are directly under MOE's supervision, kindergartens in Singapore are private institutions normally run by Christian missions such as the Catholic Church, the Bethesda Church or the Presbyterian Church; Christian organisations, for example, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA); political parties such as the PAP's kindergartens in many constituencies throughout the island and private enterprises. Permission to carry out observations in the two kindergartens was obtained directly from the Principals, while in the case of the other six schools and colleges

permission was sought from the Senior Personnel Officer at MOE headquarters.

Bearing in mind, firstly, the specific request of the Principals, teachers and pupils of the schools involved in the observations not to make public their identities and, secondly, the sensitive implications that are likely to arise as the outcome of the observations, it was decided to use pseudonyms for the teachers and pupils interviewed while the schools and colleges are named alphabetically. The 2 kindergartens are described as Schools A and B, the 2 primary schools as Schools C and D, the 2 secondary schools as Schools E and F and the 2 junior colleges as Schools G and H.

A preliminary visit to the school to meet the Principal and Vice-Principal to make arrangements for observations, to survey the school premises and familiarise herself with its organisation and administration, took place before observations were carried out. Having decided on the days and dates selected by the Principal or Vice-Principal of each school suitable for the author's purpose, the author then spent two full days, that is, 2 school sessions per day, in each of the kindegartens , 4 full days in each of the primary and secondary schools and 3 days in each of the junior colleges. A variety of subjects ranging from story-telling in the kindergarten schools to Literature and General Paper in the junior colleges was arranged for the observations.

Adopting the anthropological research method, the author took field notes while lessons were in progress. Although audio recordings might assist in post hoc analysis it has, as Delamont and Hamilton (54) stress, the disadvantage in that much of the (usually implicit) contextual data normally made available to the on-site observer, may be lost. Although an elaborate technology can assist description of behaviour, it cannot provide explanations for that behaviour. Therefore, only 'live' data is accounted for in these observations. To add authenticity to the 'live' data, informal interviews with a number of teachers and pupils of the observed classes were caried out as well as a questionnaire survey with secondary and junior college pupils.

The main area of concentration in the author's observations was related to teacher-pupil interactions. The teaching styles of teachers - whether didactic, open-ended or discovery learning - and the teachers' interaction with the classes - whether teachers directed questions more often to boy or girl pupils, whether teachers invited questions and responses, praised or encouraged, critised or reprimanded boy or girl pupils more often, whether teachers went to boy or girl pupils more often to help with an exercise - was examined to establish whether sex-role stereotyping and overt discriminatory practices prevailed in the classrooms observed. A table listing the lessons that were observed and the teachers who were interviewed plus an addendum on methodology applied in classroom observations is

given in Appendix 7.C.

7.4 Classroom observations in the 8 schools and junior colleges

7.4.1 Observations in Schools A and B

The two kindergartens, Schools A and B, were selcted on the basis on their historical, socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. Both Schools A and B were among the earliest established kindergartens in Singapore having been in existence for over two decades. School A is situated in a quiet residential estate in the eastern part of the island. It is a three-storey building with an annex which acts as a hall for assembly and music room for lessons in singing and movement. Right in front of the building is the playground with a twin-seater swing, a slide and a corner with mounds of loose sand and a number of pails and spades.

There are two sessions per day, the first lasting from 8 in the morning to 11.30 a.m. while the second is from 12 noon to 3.30 p.m. The schools has a mixed population of Chinese, Malay and Indian infants whose ages ranged from 3 to 5 plus. Ninety per cent of the pupils are Chinese while the rest are Malays and Indians. The boys and girls who attend this school are all from middle and upper classes since the fees they pay are higher than thos who attend schools run by the PAP or the YWCA. The Principal, all teachers and office assistants in School A are females. The teaching staff are all qualified teachers specialising in

infant school teaching.

The classes are arranged according to age. The youngest children have their lessons on the ground floor while the oldest occupy classes on the top floor. However, they all assemble in the hall when it is time for music lessons. It is only when the children have to do some written work or draw on their own that they sit in their desks and chairs otherwise they usually gather round the teacher, sitting on the floor while she tells them a story or gives them a lesson on counting.

All the pupils, boys and girls, wear uniforms. To differentiate between the morning (AM) and afternoon (PM) sessions, the uniforms are of different colour shades. Training in discipline and order starts from the first day the children enter the school. They have to line up in twos usually it is two boys and two girls abreast with all the girls in front or vice-versa, as they make their way to their classrooms when school starts and from their classrooms to the playground at the end of the session.

School B is situated about a mile and a half away from School A on the periphery of another housing estate. It is an old two-storey building which used to house a particular order of nuns of the Catholic faith. The top floor of the building is still used by the supervisor and a few members of the order. Only the ground floor accommodates the pupils. It is one large hall and low

cupboards partition the area into classes. Four different sets of pupils according to their age group occupy the area. One large space to the extreme left of the hall wih a piano, is where the children have their music lessons.

In front of the building as in School A, there is the playground with its double-seater swing, a tree house and mounds of loose sand. Pupils wear uniforms and like the pupils of School A, they generally belong to middle and upper classes and are made up predominantly of Chinese with less than ten per cent of Malays and Indians. The absence of walled-up classrooms results in a more open, relaxed atmosphere which pervades the entire school. Both Principals of Schools A (a Chinese) and School B (an Eurasian), are warm, pleasant and helpful but the five female staff of School B are more approachable and communicative. There are no Malay member of staff in either schools. There is no Indian member of staff in School A while School B has one Indian member.

In her first visit to School A to meet the Principal and arrange the periods for the observations, the author made a survey of the premises. A class of pupils were at play in the playground. Groups of three or four girls were seated quietly under cool shades happily talking away while a few were by the swing. The boys were, however, actively running around and chasing each other, building castles on the sand or gliding down the slide. Their cheery shouts broke the silence of the otherwise serene

environment.

During a ten-minute break in School B after a story-telling session and before the start of another lesson, the children were told to play with toys piled up in one corner of the partitioned room. The boys hastily made for the building blocks and toys like aeroplanes and trains while the girls played at cooking and ironing. Two of the girls picked up story books and quietly went through the pages.

Both schools were identical in terms of sex segregation. Boys and girls were listed separately on the register. Both schools had different lavatories for the sexes and separated boys from girls when they lined up before and after an activity to and from their classes or when they were seated in the hall during assemblies. These were but some of the ways in which the children were constantly reminded that they were either male or female, when this was irrelevant to the activity in which they were engaged.

The use of sex segregation to motivate and control children was commonly applied by teachers in both schools. In one example, a teacher in School A to encourage all the pupils in her class to play act a scene during a lesson announced:

> Boys, I would like you to be soldiers big and strong and march round the room as though you are going to war. Girls, you will be nurses and look after the soldiers who are hurt.

During a singing and movement period in School B, a boy who tripped and fell and was reluctant to rejoin the class was chided:

> Lee Meng is a little girl. He should be wearing a blouse and skirt, don't you boys think so?

Later, the girls formed a group and danced and sang to the music played on the piano by another teacher. Then the boys formed their group and did the same movements and sang. Finally the two groups performed together. All the while, the teacher was goading the two groups to put up their best performance, telling the boys:

> Look, the girls are singing very sweetly and clearly. Now try to sing better than the girls.

Turning to the girls, she said,

> Girls, the boys are clapping and stamping their feet in tune. Come, show them that you too can do the same.

In a class of five year olds in School A where a counting lesson was in progress, the teacher Miss Tay wrote two sums on the blackboard:

> (1) Father went fishing and caught 12 fishes. He sold 7. How many had he left?
>
> (2) Mother went to the market and spent $1.20 cents on a piece of pork and 70 cents on vegetables. How much did she spend at the market?

There are examples of unnecessary sextyping in academic material. Such implicit sexism are never counterbalanced by

mathematical problems about mother going fishing or father going marketing to get the essentials for the daily meal.

A number of similar patterns also emerged during the observations carried out in both schools. Predominant among these was the difference in the behaviour of male and female pupils generally regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. Where the girls were generally quiet, obedient and attentive, the boys were noisy, fidgety and inattentive. However, when it came to the answering of questions, the boys were usually the first to put up their hands. A few girls only made the attempt when coaxed on by their teachers. Thus, in the seven classes observed, teachers had a tendency to pick on boys to answer questions. Teachers were quick to praise the efforts made by most boys but when girl pupils offered answers, only part of which were correct, their attempts were met with scant praise or encouragement. Teachers in both schools, however, do encourage the infants to ask questions and to express their views. On most occasions, it was the boys who took the initiative. Besides being less communicative in class during question time, girls generally also receive fewer reprimands and punishments from teachers.

During a drawing session with a class of five year olds in School B, the author approached 2 boys and 2 girls and asked them what they would like to be when they grow up. Boy A, a Chinese, who comes from an English-speaking home, confidently replied that he wants to be a pilot like his

father. Boy B, a Malay, is keen to become a policeman. His uncle and a big brother are in the police force and they both look tough and smart in their uniforms. Girl A, a rather shy Indian girl, though for some time, then timidly whispered that she would like to be a teacher. When aked why she chose this profession, she replied that her father often reminded her two older sisters that teaching is a good job for girls. Girl B, a Malay, whose father is a professional and whose mother is a housewife, said that she would like to follow her mother's footsteps. Her mother did not have to work for a living since she was well provided for by her father. All she needed to do was to run the household and look after the children.

An extract of an informal discussion between the observer and the teachers revealed the teachers' views about the children they teach:

Observer : What do you think of the girls you teach?
Mrs. Chan : They are nice and polite but dull.
(School A)
Miss Sim : They are quiet, hardworking and attentive in
(School A) class
Miss Tan : A tidy and well-disciplined lot but not as
(School B) lively and sharp as the boys.
Mrs. Rajah: I like teaching them. They are so sweet and
(School B) obedient.

To the question, "What do you think of the boys you teach?" the consensus of opinion was that boys were "active", "creative", "naughty", "untidy", "tough", and "good at counting". When asked which group they preferred teaching, except for two teachers, one from each school, the

rest explicitly expressed preference for teaching boys despite their various shortcomings.

7.4.2 Observations in Schools C and D

School C which is situated in the midst of a residential cum shopping district in the South-eastern part of the island, is a two session school run by a Principal, a Chinese, who has years of experience behind him. He is due for retirement soon but he is well-liked by all members of his staff. He treats them as his equals and allows them a free hand to operate their classes as they see fit within the bounds of MOE requirements and regulations. His female Chinese assistant, the Vice-Principal, is also a popular figure with the staff. Like her superior, sh mixes freely with her subordinates and her office is always open to anyone, staff and pupils alike who need advice and assistance. Thus, the climate here is conducive to study and work.

The school is a block of buildings consisting of three floors with the Principal's, Vice-Principal's and general administration office, the large staffroom and a few classes for the lower primaries on the ground floor. Classes for the upper primaries occupy the second and third floors. There is no hall for assembly and the shool shares a common field for games and other outdoor activities with another primary school directly facing it across the field. Toilets for boys are at one end of the block of the building while those for girls are at the other end.

The large staffroom which is made up of two class spaces consist of three long rows of tables. The first and second rows of tables nearest to the doors are usually occupied by female members of the staff while the inner third row nearer to the row of windows is where the male members of the staff congregate to mark books and to relax and have their cups of coffee. The staff comprise two-thirds females to one-third males. All members of both sexes of the staff of both sessions are on good terms. They laugh, talk and discuss freely on issues of interest across their respective tables.

School D like School C, is also one of the older established primary schools in Singapore, both being in existence before the PAP Government first came into power in 1959. Unlike School C, it is made up of six blocks of single-storey buildings. Up to 1983, two blocks used to represent one primary school but falling rolls, the result of the government's extensive family planning programmes (See Chapter 5), had necessitated the combining of the three schools into one unit under the headship of a single male Principal assisted by a male Vice-Principal. Although the Principal is also another very experienced Chinese man in his middle fifties, he is new to his diverse staff, the remnants of the original force left to make up the present unit. A number of the staff and pupils of each of the three schools had been transferred to other neighbouring schools. The small number of teachers and pupils of each of the

previous schools continue to occupy their own blocks of buildings. The teachers continue to use their own staffrooms where male teachers gather in one corner while female teachers work and relax in their own corner. The dispersed classrooms in the sprawling two acres of buildings and two playing fields give a detached atmosphere about the place. Principal and Vice-Principal-teacher relationship though good generally, lack the warmth and depth of rapport in School C.

In both schools, however, points of similarity exist in the academic standards of the pupils and their socio-economic backgrounds generally. The pupils come from lower middle and working class homes with most fathers holding jobs as taxi-drivers, bus drivers, factory workers, stall holders, shop assistants and a small percentage with parents as teachers, managers and other professionals such as accountants and engineers. As in Schools A and B, both Schools C and D are mixed-sex schools with Chinese, Malay and Indian pupils in the ratio of 7 Chinese to 2 Malays and 1 Indian. Both schools C and D are government primary schools.

The children of both schools whose ages range from 6 to 12, have to line up in twos, usually two boys and two girls abreast with the girls leading the classes as they make their way to and from their classes after each activity. A common feature in the classes is the segregation of the sexes, with the boys occupying one half

of the room while girls occupy the other half. In two of the classes observed, a change in the pattern was seen with a boy/girl, boy/girl alternately occupying the first two rows facing the blackboard. To the observer's query as to the break in the pattern, the two class teachers Miss Lim of School C and Mr. Lee of School D explained:

Observer: What factors govern your arrangement of the seating positions of your pupils?
Miss Lim: The sex of the pupils, their behaviour and their performance. Of course the heights of the pupils are taken into consideration. It would be senseless to allow very tall pupils to occupy the front seats since they would obstruct the views of the shorter ones in the class.
Mr. Lee : The sex of the pupils, their heights and their behaviour
Observer: Except for the first two rows where a boy and a girl is seated alternately, the rest of the class is clearly half boys and half girls. Why is this so?
Miss Lim: The six boys in the first two rows are put there because they are noisy, trouble-makers. They were fond of teasing the girls when they were at the back of the class. I can keep an eye on them in the front rows.
Mr. Lee: I put these boys in the front rows next to the girls so that they will feel 'small'. They are known bullies especially to the girls. Besides, they are generally poor in their work. I can monitor their progress and behaviour with this arrangement.

In both Schools C and D, the ten teachers' style of teaching was didactic. Seventy per cent of each of the 10 lessons observed was predominantly teacher talk in which the teachers dominated the lessons. In School C, a Primary 3 class was having a Mathematics Quiz in which the pupils were divided into 4 groups. Although the questions were prepared by the class teacher, the pupils were required to go up to the blackboard to work out the problems. Thus, for

this particular lesson, pupil talk and participation was greater than teacher talk. This quiz which was open to all the members of the group in that, whoever in the group felt that he or she could solve the problems read out by the teacher, could volunteer to represent his or her group. Although there was an equal number of boys and girls in the class, it was usually the boys who surged forward to represent their groups. The ratio of boy to girl paticipation was 3:1. Besides taking the initiative, the boys also showed in this quiz that they were more mathematically inclined than the girls since 80 per cent of their answers compared to 60 per cent of the girls' answers were correct.

Teacher-pupil rapport was generally good in both schools though male teachers generally exhibited a tendency to be on warmer terms with boy pupils allowing them to ask questions and initiate talk in class. Jokes, at times sexist in nature, were cracked by the male teachers with the upper classes which the boys understood and enjoyed. During written work while moving round the class, they were seen to stop more often by the desks of male pupils, checking their work, assisting them or encouraging them on. Whether it was relating a story or explaining a Mathematics problem, it appeared that both male and female teachers were talking to the boys two thirds of the time, only occasionally directing their eyes and attention to the girls. When the teachers were confronted with the observer's findings regarding their teaching style in the areas of directing their questions

more often to boys, of paying more attention to boys and of encouraging them more often than girls, they generally expressed surprise. They thought they had in fact paid more attention to the girl pupils or at least had distributed their time and attention equally to both girl and boy pupils.

Bearing in mind the cultural backgrounds of the Chinese, Malay and Indian pupils whereby females are expected to be neat in appearance, obedient and well-behaved within and without the home and especially to be 'feminine' (64) at all times, this probably explains why girl pupils in both schools were generally obedient, tidy in their work and quiet in class. The girls who did make attempts to participate actively in class represented a minority and these were mainly Chinese pupils. To identify their socio-economic backgrounds and the type of socialisation they were imbued with, which might reflect the more overt behaviour of these pupils, the observer spoke to three Primary Five girl pupils. An extract of the informal interview follows:

Observer : What is your father's or mother's occupation?
Soo Lin (School C) : My father is a teacher. My mother is a nursing sister.
Peck Hay (School C) : My father is a company manager and my mother is a teacher.
Bee Lan (School D) : My father is an accountant. My mother is not working. She is a housewife.
Observer : Do your parents check your school work and help you with your lessons?
Soo Lin : My father looks through my exercises every night. He helps me with my sums and English.
Peck Hay : My father is a very busy man. he comes home very late every night. Mother checks my work now and then. She helps me with my English exercises.

Bee Lan : My mother sees to it that I complete my homework daily before she allows me to watch television.
Observer : Are you allowed to be in the sitting room when guests are around?
All three : Oh Yes. But they tell us to go away when they have something important to discuss.
Observer : Do your parents encourage you to talk to them if you have problems?
Soo Lin : Both my parents are modern and understanding. They often remind me to tell them any problems I have.
Peck Hay : My mother loves me very much. She is very helpful and I tell her all my problems.
Bee Lan : Although dad is a busy man, he is interested in what I do and we talk to each other all the time when he is free. I tell him what happens in school and he tells me interesting things that took place in the office.

Further investigation into the socio-economic backgrounds of girl pupils of the other ethnic groups might reveal a more restricted upbringing and style of socialisation with which these girls were imbued, led the observer to speak to two Primary Six girl pupils: a Malay pupil called Aminah of School C and an Indian pupil named Gita of School D. An extract of the discussion follows:

Observer: What is your father's or mother's occupation?
Aminah : My father is a storekeeper. Mother is a housewife.
Gita : Both my parents are working. Father is a bus driver. Mother is a washerwoman.
Observer: Do your parents go over your school work?
Aminah : Father sometimes asks me how I'm getting on with my work but he is not very well educated.
Gita : My father and mother are both uneducated. They can't help me with my school work.
Observer: Do your parents allow you to remain in the sitting room and talk to visitors?
Aminah : Oh No. My mother would never allow it. From a young age, she taught my sisters and I to be well-behaved at home and outside. We must not be seen or heard when there are guests in the house.
Gita : Father and mother too always remind us to show respect to older people, and only speak when spoken to.

The issue of which group, that is, boy or girl pupils that teachers tend to pay more attention to, was raised with a number of pupils from these two schools. The responses of 6 pupils, 3 boys from School C and 3 girls from School D, are given below:

Observer : Do your teachers treat the boys and girls in your class differently?

Seng Kiat: (School C - boys) My teachers praise all boys and girls who do well and punish both boys and girls who misbehave or are rude to them.

Muhammed : My sirs are nice to the girls but they and the lady teachers often send the boys to the Principal's office when they misbehave.

Sanjit : I think male teachers are generally nicer to the boys. However, they tend to ignore the girls. Lady teachers too pay more attention to us.

Florence : (School D - girls) My teachers talk to the boys most of the time. They seldom ask us how we are getting on in our lessons.

Maimunah : Unless we have done something wrong, they are usually fair to both boys and girls.

Sarojini : Yes, they do treat us differently. They think the boys are smarter and stronger. They ask them to do things for them like sending messages to the office or to carry books to the staffroom. My Mathematics teacher always calls on the boys to work out sums on the blackboard.

The issue of what they would like to be in the future was raised with some kindergarten pupils in Schools A and B. The same question was put across to 40 pupils: 20 each from Schools C and D. Of the twenty, 10 were boy and 10 were girl pupils. Table 7.H shows the breakdown of the pupils' choice of professions/jobs in the future:

TABLE 7.H

CHOICE OF PROFESSIONS/JOBS OF BOY AND GIRL PUPILS OF SCHOOLS C AND D

Profession/Job	Boys	Girls
Doctor	3	2
Lawyer	2	1
Engineer	3	-
Accountant	2	1
Teacher	1	5
Businessman/Business-woman	3	2
Technician	2	-
Fireman	1	-
Soldier	2	-
Policeman/Police-women	1	1
Stenographer	-	3
Nurse	-	2
Sales assistant	-	2
Housewife	-	1
Total	20	20

The figures in the above table represent the ambitions of Primaries Four, Five and Six pupils whose average age is eleven years. Even at this young age, boy and girl pupils seem to select the types of jobs which are either male or female-oriented. No boy has opted to become a nurse or stenographer, traditionally female-oriented professions while no girl has chosen to become engineers, soldiers or technicians, traditionally male-oriented professions.

All the ten teachers of the observed classes in both Schools C and D were asked whether they generally preferred teaching boy or girl pupils. As with the teachers in Schools A and B, 6 of the teachers in Schools C and D

expressed their preference for teaching boys. Although girl pupils rarely gave them any trouble and were neat in their work and handed in their homework punctually, teachers, both males and females generally found them to be dull and uninteresting, less creative and responsive as boy pupils.

7.4.3 Observations in Schools E and F

School E, in the South-eastern part of Singapore was one of the first secondary schools built by the PAP Government in the early 1960s as part of its education expansion programme. It has an enrolment of 2,000 pupils in both morning and afternoon sessions. It is a four-storey building made up of three blocks of classrooms which together with the canteen, form a rectangle. Adjacent to the wstern block, is a block of single storey workshops where practical work in technical studies are conducted. There are four Science laboratories and classrooms on the ground floor. A large hall, the offices of the Principal, Vice-Principal and general administration and the staffroom, are on the first floor. Unlike the primary schools where the staff gather at long tables to mark their books and have their snacks, the secondary teachers each have their own desks to work on. A space in the centre of the large staffroom is converted into a sitting room for guests and visitors. There are several comfortable armchairs to relax in. Segregation of the sexes among the staff is not so prevalent here as the desks were not arranged according to biological differences, but according to surnames in

alphabetical order.

The Principal of this school is an Eurasian while his assistant is a Chinese. A mixed staff of Chinese, Malay and Indian university graduates and holders of Certificates in Education, help run the school. Females outnumber males in the ratio of 3 female to 2 male teachers. Although the Principal is outwardly pleasant, he belongs to the new breed of dynamic professionals who knows his job and expects his staff to be equally efficient. Teachers avoid his office unless pressed by urgent matters that require his personal attention. The Vice-Principal is new to his job having been appointed only three months earlier. However, he tries his best to get on good terms with his subordinates by occasionally popping into the staffroom to have a word with a member of the staff, to personally deliver a message to a member of the staff or joining his male colleagues for a cup of coffee in the school canteen.

School F, which is situated amidst a pleasant country environment of trees and greenery, on a hillock, also has a history of two decades behind it. Being built at almost the same time as School E, it has the same architectural features as School E. Other similarities include the size, the academic abilities and socio-economic backgrounds of their pupil population. Only those pupils who had performed brilliantly in their PSLE, scoring not less than 3 As out of 4 compulsory subjects, could get into a number of the top schools which are classified under Group

One or Group Two, in the parents' choice of secondary schools for their children. Both Schools E and F fall under Groups Three and Four which imply that they are open to less academically able pupils. Except for a small percentage of pupils (about 10 per cent of the total enrolment in each school) whose parents are professionals, for example, teachers, managers and engineers, the parents of the rest are lower-income working class people such as clerks, bus and taxi dribers, bus conductors and sales persons.

In the four visits to School F, the first time to meet the administrators to arrange the days and periods of observation and to familiarise herself with the school set-up, the author did not have the opportunity of meeting the Principal. On the first occasion, she was attending a meeting outside the school and on the other three instances, she was aborad on special leave to attend a family function. The Vice-Principal with whom the author dealt, was a Chinese in his late thirties who though new to his job, was efficient. He had a flair for being able to communicate with both sexes of his staff but it was mainly the male members who called more often to his office to discuss their problems and with whom he sat down to a meal in the canteen.

Visits to the two kindergartens and two primary schools revealed the application of sex segregation to maintain discipline and order among the children in the way they line up before and after an activity or in their seating arrangements in class or during assemblies. The

same procedure was evident in these two seconary schools in that the girls and boys lined up in two abreast with the girls leading the classes, as they made their way to and from an activity. However, they were not restricted to such segregation as in the seating arrangements in the classes: though the boys had a tendency to occupy the back rows. But in a first form Science lesson conducted in the laboratory, the girls and boys were seated in separate rows of six alternately, each having a partner of their sex to carry out experiments together.

A combination of didactic and discovery learning formed the teacher's styles of teaching generally in both schools. While teacher talk still dominated most lessons, pupils were encouraged to go up to the blackboard to work out mathematical problems, to find out for themselves the reactions of certain chemicals in a General Science lesson and to form groups to tabulate categories of animals and plants in a Biology lesson or to discover as many metaphors and idiomatic phrases as they could in a Literature lesson. Generally, the classroom atmosphere in the four upper forms in both schools were more relaxed with boys and girls forming mixed groups in group work and discussions.

Both male and female teachers appeared to have established good rapport with their pupils though generally, despite the higher percentage of girl pupils in all the 8 observed classes, the teachers tended to call upon male pupils more often to answer questions and to initiate talk.

Boy pupils too were faster to put up their hands to answer questions. Girl pupils were generally less co-operative, content to let the boys do the answering though most of them knew the answers when picked upon by their teachers. Although female teachers generally treated both boy and girl pupils equally giving almost equal attention to both sexes by stopping by their desks to check their work and talk to them, male teachers displayed a greater tendency to ignore girl pupils. Male teachers directed their questions seven out of ten times to boys whether it be a Science or an English lesson. They appeared more restrained in their contacts with girl pupils while they chatted more freely with the boys, often treating them as their equals.

On the issue of hat pupils thought of their teachers' behaviour in class, the observer spoke to a number of pupils to get their opinions. Swee Lee, a Chinese girl of School E, Ahmad, a Malay boy of School E, Beng Kuan, a Chinese boy of School F and Pushpa, an Indian girl of School F gave their views:

Observer : Who do teachers pay more attention to (a) boys or (b) girls in class?
Swee Lee : Boys, of course.
Ahmad : Girls are quiet, boys are more lively therefore, they get more attention.
Beng Kuan: Boys are more often called to answer questions and they also receive more punishment and ridicule because they are more outspoken and daring.
Pushpa : My form teacher, a male, always talks to the boys and helps them with their exercises. He hardly stops by my desk or encourages me to participate in class discussions.
Observer : How do male teachers behave towards: (a) the boys and (b) the girls they teach?

Swee Lee : Male teachers get on well with the boys. They laugh and joke with them. They seldom talk to us girls and they forget our names.
Ahmad : Our sirs are nice and kind to us boys. They let us pass up our books late. They leave the girls alone to do their work.
Beng Kuan: My teacher talks to the intelligent girls in my class and ignores the other girls. However, he is friendly with all the boys.
Pushpa : All the male teachers including my teacher, get on well with the boys. They seldom joke with us. Sometimes we girls feel as though we do not exist and are not part of the class.
Observer : How do female teachers behave towards (a) the boys and (b) the girls they teach?
Swee Lee : They are strict and expect us to hand in our exercises on time. But they always ask the boys to answer questions and to do things for them.
Ahmad : They are nice on the whole but we boys get scoldings more often.
Beng Kuan: They treat us equally. Boys and girls who do good work are encouraged and praised while those who make mistakes are ticked off.
Pushpa : A few lady teachers treat us better than the boys. However, the majority are nicer and kinder to the boys. They think the boys are cleverer than us.

The observer spoke to the eight teachers of the observed classes about their attitudes towards the boy and girl pupils they teach. Two of the four female teachers spoke well of the girls they teach. They found them not only a disciplined group but polite and well-mannered and enjoyed teaching girls generally. Of the four male teachers, only one preferred teaching girl to boy pupils. The remaining five male and female teachers expressed their preference for teaching boys whom they found more active, co-operative, generally less inhibited and more receptive to new concepts than girls.

As in the kindergartens and primary schools, the issue of what their future ambitions would be, was raised

with a total of 40 pupils, 20 from each school made up of 10 boy and 10 girl pupils. Of the 20 boy pupils from both schools, whose choices of professions range from that of that of doctor and engineer to businessman and soldier, none selected generally female-oriented jobs like nursing and stenography. As for the girls, they too generally avoided male-oriented jobs like becoming engineers or technicians or joining the army, but opted for such female-oriented professions as teaching, nursing and becoming stenographers (80%) with only 2 choosing to be doctore, one a business-woman and one a lawyer.

So far classroom observations of the three stages of education in Singapore have revealed the teaching styles of these teachers who were observed and their interactions with the mixed classes they teach. The next section looks at the way teachers in two junior colleges react to boy and girl pupils in the mixed cvlasses they each.

7.4.4 Observations in Schools G and H

Junior college G is a government institution while Junior college H is a government-aided Anglican school. Both boys and girls of all socio-economic classes, of all creeds and ethnic groups are eligible for admission to both these colleges which prepare them for the GCE 'A' Level Examinations, on condition they satisfy the entry stipulation of 17 points and below, based on their GCE 'O' Level results (65). School G was built fifteen years ago while School H is much newer, being built only six years

ago. Both schools are on sprawling grounds with several blocks of three-storey buildings, spacious canteens, large libraries, several Science laboratories and lecture halls which can accommodate over a hundred pupils at one sitting. Some of the sports facilities available to the pupils iclude their own sports fields for track and field events, a hall for indoor sports and gymnastics and large changing rooms for male and female pupils.

The Principals of both schools are men while their immediate assistants are females. The Head of School G was a soft-spoken man, helpful and approachable. However, the Vice-Principal had a detached air about her, avoiding direct contact with visitors, leaving the chore to her superior. Except for the two kindergartens where there were no Vice-Principals, this was the only school of the other six visited where the author communicated directly with the Principal, discussed and arranged the observation time-tables with him and was introduced to the heads of departments by him. As for School H, the female Vice-Principal was the opposite. She was warm and friendly though she lacked the initiative to act on her own, relying on her superior's decisions before committing herself to any issues. Unfortunately, the author did not meet the Principal for on the four visits to the school he was away attending meetings.

Large staffrooms for both members of the staff to work and relax in were available in both schools. Teachers

had their own desks but male and female staff members maintained their distance. Conversation was mainly between the members of the same sex. Even in cases where their immediate neighbours were members of the opposite sex, the flow of conversation was restrained and limited to essential issues relative to their work and administration.

All teachers in both colleges were university degree holders. However, the acute shortage of suitably qualified personnel to teach higher forms was evident in School G where there were six English male teachers mainly recruited from the United Kingdom to teach English Language, English Literature and General paper. School H was run mainly by local staff with three expatriates among its members. A number of the staff of this school had received their training and qualifications from abroad, namely Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Both colleges had an approximate ratio of 1 male to 1.5 fmale teachers.

As in the kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, Chinese boys and girls dominated the pupil population. There were approximately 15 Chinese to 1 Indian pupil and approximately 50 Chinese to 1 Malay pupil. Although Malay pupils are exempt from paying fees, few were able to make the grade. In both colleges, there were approximately 55 per cent boys to 45 per cent girls.

Although pupils still lined up in two male and two

female pairs abreast first thing in the morning when they assemble in the courtyard for the flag-raising ceremony, the use of sex segregation to control and maintain discipline within the classrooms was not applied. Boys and girls sat where they liked and it was not unusual to find them sitting next to each other and sharing notes. Chalk and talk from the teachers alone was less evident. Pupils' contribution and participation were greater. However, a common trend in both colleges was again the tendency of both male and female teachers to call upon boy pupils more often to answer questions and to carry out errands, for example, erasing the blackboard or bringing books to the teachers to mark. In many instances, boys were encouraged more often to initiate talk, to comment on issues at debate and their points were carried. Some attempts were made by girls to participate in class discussions but it was ultimately the boys who had the greater say and were generally more adept at putting their views across.

Both within and outside the classroom, the four male and female teachers of the 8 observed classes, showed a bias towards their male pupils. Not only did they direct their questions to them more often, they also tended to be more sympathetic toards them, allowing them to pass unfair rmarks on the girls, stopping by their desks for longer periods while they were at written work and laughing and joking with them outside the classroom. During break in the canteens, groups of boys could be seen gathering round their teachers, talking and laughing with them. The girls

usually congregated in groups of their own, away from their teachers and their male classmates.

As in the secondary schools, the observer spoke to a number of the pupils in Schools G and H to gauge their perceptions of the male and female tachers who taught them. An excerpt of the informal interviews with two boys and two girls of both colleges is given below. Again a cross section of the ethnic population was chosen. The two pupils from School G were Zainah, a Malay girl and Kim Thoe, a Chinese boy while the two pupils from School H were Rajpal, an Indian boy and Siew Guat, a Chinese girl.

Observer : Who do you prefer to be taught by, male or female teachers? Why?
Zainah : Female teachers, of course. They do their homework and we get our assignments back early.
Kim Thoe : Male teachers. They are more understanding and their lessons are more interesting.
Rajpal : I don't mind either as long as they are good in their work.
Siew Guat: Male teachers are friendlier and less strict, but female teachers are better. They are more conscientious. They come to class prepared for their lessons.
Observer : Who do male teachers pay more attention to (a) the boys or (b) the girls in class?
Zainah : Male teachers pay more attention to the boys. They question them more often and joke with them regularly.
Kim Thoe : I think it's the boys.
Rajpal : In my opinion, you can say boys get more attention if you consider the fact that boys are asked more questions - that's because the girls are less co-operative. But boys also receive more punishments and are expected to be handymen in the class often helping to do things.
Siew Guat: There are more girls in my class so girls get a little more attention than boys.
Observer : Who do female teachers pay more attention to (a) the boys or (b) the girls in class?
Zainah : The female teachers here always direct questions to the boys. They seldom call on the girls to do things for them, but they do check our work

thoroughly

Kim Thoe : Female teachers here seem to pay more attention to boys. If I can remember in my primary and secondary school days, the female teachers then were always calling on boys to run errands for them, to organise class parties and to answer questions.

Rajpal : As I said earlier, boys are more co-operative and responsive, therefore, teachers also tend to focus their attention on us.

Siew Guat: There are three girls to one boy in my class, therefore, the female subject teacher who teach us are more sympathetic to the boys. Both boys and girls are encouraged to participate in class discussions but the teachers often approach the boys to check their exercises and ask them about their progress in their studies.

Since entry to junior colleges is based on academic performance, that is, on the GCE 'O' Level results, as pointed out earlier, the pupils of these colleges represent the top 20% of the students who pass their GCE 'O' Levels yearly. It would be interesting to discover what professions/jobs these pupils, many of whom would eventually make their way to the university and other tertiary institutions, would like to have in future. As with primary and secondary pupils, the observer questioned a total of 40 pupils, 20 from each college, made up of 10 males and 10 females. Of the 20 male responses from the two colleges, 4 each wanted to be doctors and lawyers, 2 each wanted to be social workers, engineers and teachers and 1 each chose professions as businessman, technician, journalist, lecturer, politician and soldier. Of the 20 female responses, 5 each wanted to become lawyers and computer programmers, 3 opted for teaching, 2 for secretarial work and 1 each looked forward to becoming an engineer, an accountant, a social worker, a businessman and copywriter in

an advertising firm. Except for 2 each who chose to be social workers and teachers which are professions more often associated with females in Singapore, the rest of the boys opted for male-oriented professions/jobs. In the case of the girl pupils, their choices reflect a less sexist attitude than the responses of primary and secondary pupils with 60 per cent of them wanting to take up law, computer programming, engineering and accounting - traditionally male-oriented professions.

Teachers' opinions of their pupils and their preference for teaching either sex were again sought as in the other three stages. Generally, both male and female teachers thought more highly of the boys and preferred teaching them. Mr. Chua of School H found the boys not only more responsive, more scientifically and mathematically inclined, generally more intelligent but also more interesting to teach. Two male and two female teachers from the two colleges agreed with him. However, Mrs. Ng and Miss Wan of School G disagreed with the views of these five teachers. They were of the opinion that more girls than boys were, in fact, better students from the results of pupils' performances in the GCE 'A' Level Examinations in the past three years, where at least 10% more girls on the whole, received full certificates compared to boys in their school. Although they conceded that girls were less scientifically and mathematically inclined than boys, on the other hand, girls were better in the languages, wrote better

essays and were undeniably, more hardworking, better disciplined and less outspoken. Teachers, they concluded, generally encounter fewer discipline problems with girls. The two lady teachers had the support of Mr. Teng from School H who also enjoyed teaching girls. He recalled that in his six years of teaching, he never once had to send a girl down to the Principal's office for disciplinary action.

Similar patterns, particularly in the application of sex segregation to maintain order and discipline within the classroom, were prevalent in the first three stages while outside the classroom, the practice of lining up in two of the same sex as the pupils proceeded to and from an activity, was followed right through the four stages. The concept of sex segregation was reinforced by the administrators who maintained their distance with their subordinates of the opposite sex and the same attitude was displayed among male and female teachers. Male teachers too refrained from establishing a close rapport with their girl pupils.

Throughout the four stages, both male and female teachers were found to be directing their questions to boy pupils more frequently, encouraging them, spending more time with them in their exercises and generally calling upon them to run errands for them. The comments of secondary and junior college pupils regarding the attention male and female teachers pay to boy pupils, seem to confirm what the observer discovered in her observations in all the four

stages.

The selection of boys and girls for school offices, for example, school prefects, games captains, class monitors by male and female teachers and further investigation into some aspects of male and female teachers' behaviour in class towards their pupils might further throw light on whether sex-role stereotyping and sex discrimination prevail in Singapore schools. The pupils' perceptions were mainly drawn from their answers to a short questionnaire which was handed out mainly to secondary and junior college pupils of the 8 observed classes.

7.5 Pupils' responses to Questionnaire

7.5.1 Teachers' interactions with pupils

As part of the classroom observations, a short questionnaire (See Appendix 7.D) was distributed to secondary and junior college pupils to further investigate pupils' perceptions of male and female teachers' behaviour and interactions with the pupils they teach. The focus of the questionnaire was on two areas: firstly, male and female teachers' selection of pupils for school offices such as school prefects, school librarians, class monitors and games captains; and secondary, male and female teachers behaviour towards pupils in such aspects as which categories of pupils, that is, boys and girls, or both boys and girls get more praise or receive more punishment from amle and female teachers; whether male or female teachers have a tendency to

choose boys or girls or both sexes of pupils more often to answer questions, to lead a debate, to set up a practical in a Science lesson and whether they generally look at either or both sexes more often in class.

The questionnaire forms were distributed to the pupils at the end of each observed lesson. Altogether, 492 forms were distributed: 252 to secondary school and 240 to junior college pupils. Tables 7.I(1) and 7.I(2) show the secondary pupils' responses to Question 1, Parts A and B; Tables 7.J(1) and 7.J(2), the junior college pupils' responses to Question 1, Parts A and B; Tables 7.K(1) and 7.K(2), the secondary pupils' responses to Question 2, Parts A and B and Tables 7.L(1) and 7.L(2), the junior college pupils' responses to Question 2, parts A and B.

To Part A of Question 1 of the questionnaire (See Table 7.I(1) which sought the pupils' perceptions as to whether male teachers generally select either boys or girls or both sexes for the posts of school prefect, school librarian, class monitor and games captain, from numerical count, it appeared that secondary pupils were of the opinion that male teachers tended to select both boys and girls for the posts of school prefect (78.6%) and class monitor (67.5%). Pupils perceived female teachers in Part B (See Table 7.I(2) as nominating both boys and girls for these two school posts of school prefect (77.4%) and class monitor (68.3%). For the post of school librarian, although both male and female teachers were seen to favour the appointment

TABLE 7.I(1)

QUESTION 1 Part A

Pupils' perceptions of who male teachers select more often to be:
(a) school prefects; (b) school librarians;
(c) class monitors; (d) games captains.

Secondary school pupils' responses	Total No.	Boys	%	Girls	%	Both boys & girls	%
(a) school prefects	252	25	9.9	29	11.5	198	78.6
(b) school librarians	252	3	1.2	175	69.4	74	29.4
(c) class monitors	252	52	20.6	30	11.9	170	67.5
(d) games captains	252	161	63.9	9	3.6	82	32.5

TABLE 7.I(2)

QUESTION 1 Part B

Pupils' perceptions of who female teachers select more often to be:
(a) school prefects; (b) school librarians;
(c) class monitors; (d) games captains.

Secondary school pupils' responses	Total No.	Boys	%	Girls	%	Both boys & girls	%
(a) school prefects	252	32	12.7	25	9.9	195	77.4
(b) school librarians	252	6	2.4	153	60.7	93	36.9
(c) class monitors	252	55	21.8	25	9.9	172	68.3
(d) games captains	252	80	71.4	5	2.0	67	26.6

TABLE 7.J(1)

QUESTION 1 Part A

Pupils' perceptions of who male teachers select more often to be:
(a) school prefects; (b) school librarians;
(c) class monitors (d) games captains.

Junior college pupils' responses	Total No.	Boys	%	Girls	%	Both boy & girls	%
(a) school prefects	240	39	16.3	18	7.5	183	76.3
(b) school librarians	240	2	0.8	156	65.0	82	34.2
(c) class monitors	240	14	5.8	42	17.5	184	76.7
(d) games captains	240	176	73.3	3	1.3	61	25.4

TABLE 7.J(2)

QUESTION 1 Part B

Pupils' perceptions of who female teachers select more often to be:
(a) school prefects; (b) school librarians;
(c) class monitors; (d) games captains.

Junior college pupils' responses	Total No.	Boys	%	Girls	%	Both boys & girls	%
(a) school prefects	240	36	15.0	23	9.6	181	75.4
(b) school librarians	240	2	0.8	152	63.3	86	35.8
(c) class monitors	240	19	7.9	39	16.3	182	75.8
(d) games captains	240	185	77.0	5	2.1	50	20.8

of girls for this post, male teachers (69.4%) compared to female teachers (60.7%) were seen to select girls more often than female teachers. For the post of games captains, pupils perceived both male and female as favouring boys over girls for this office.

A similar pattern in the pupils' perceptions of male and female teachers' selections, also emerged among the junior college pupils. These pupils in their responses to Parts A and B of Question 1 (See Tables 7.J(1) and 7.J(2), were of the opinion that both male and female teachers tended to choose both boys and girls for the posts of school prefect and class monitor. However, pupils also perceived male and female teachers acting stereotypically in their preference for girls for the post of school librarian and boys for the post of games captain, as figures from Tables 7.J(1) and 7.J(2) reveal. Secondary and junior college pupils agreed unanimously that male teachers tended to almost ignore boys for the post of school librarian. They also perceived that male and female teachers selected by an overwhelming majority, boys for the post of games captain.

The responses of the pupils to Question 1 Parts A and B may be seen to reflect the tendency of male and female teachers respectively to exhibit sexist attitudes in their stereotyping of the posts they think fit the sex of the pupils. For example, the post of librarian, is a traditionally female-oriented job and both male and female teachers were perceived to favour girls for this post and

hardly ever appointed boys as librarians. One normally associates a games captain with a pupil who not only enjoys the outdoor life, is tough and rugged, but is also an outstanding athlete or a champion in his or her particular field of sport. Teachers, therefore, tended to nominate boys for the post of games captains since most games are dominated by boys. Except for basketball, netball, table-tennis, badminton, volley-ball and swimming where a considerable number of female pupils participate in Singapore schools, boys generally have better sports facilities available to them. Every secondary school and junior college has a football field and there are more male P.E. teachers to coach the boys in football, in tennis and in field and track events.

Question 2 of the questionnaire focuses on male and female teachers' behaviour and interaction with their pupils in class. There are two parts as in Question 1: the first seeking pupils' responses to male teachers' and the second, female teachers' behaviour towards the pupils they teach. Question 2 carries six statements which seek to find out whether boys or girls or both boys and girls: (1) get more praise for good behaviour and good work done; (b) receive more punishment for misbehaviour (c) are more often chosen to answer questions; (d) are more often chosen to lead a debate; (e) are more often chosen to set up a practical in a Science lesson; or (f) are looked at more often, by male teachers, in Part A and female teachers in Part B.

For Question 2(a) of part A, 56% of the secondary pupils were of the opinion that male teachers tended to praise girls more often for good behaviour and for good work done. 4.8% of their responses were for male teachers' choice of boys (See Table 7.K(1)). As for Questions 2(c), 2(d) and 2(e), male teachers were perceived as preferring to select both boys and girls for these three activities. Male teachers also tended to look at boys more often than girls in class.

In their responses to female teachers to the same set of statements (See Table 7.K(2)), the secondary school pupils felt that female teachers were more inclined than their male counterparts to select both boys and girls for praise as regards Question 2(a). However, for Question 2(b), over 70% were of the view that it is boys whom female teachers pick out more often for punishment for misbehaviour. For Questions 2(c) and 2(d), the pupils thought female teachers favoured both boys and girls for the two activities and boys for 2(e). As for the last question, the pupils felt that female teachers generally looked at both boys and girls while teaching but to pay lesser attention to girls.

For all the four parts of Question 1, that is, (a) to (d), both junior college and secondary pupils had expressed similar views in their perceptions of male and female teachers' choice of pupils for the posts listed. Both male and female teachers tended, in their opinions, to

PUPILS' PERCEPTIONS OF CLASSROOM INTERACTIONS

TABLE 7.K(1)

QUESTION 2 Part A

Secondary school pupils' responses	Total No.	Boys	%	Girls	%	Both boys & girls	%
In a mixed class, who do male teachers							
(a) praise more often	252	12	4.8	141	56.0	99	39.3
(b) punish more often for isbehaviour	252	242	96.0	3	1.2	7	2.8
(c) choose more often to answer questions	252	61	24.2	55	21.8	136	54.0
(d) choose more often to lead a debate	252	78	31.0	54	21.4	120	47.6
(e) choose more often to set up a practical in a Science lesson	252	79	31.3	46	18.3	127	50.4
(f) look at more often in class?	252	109	43.3	33	13.1	110	43.7

TABLE 7.K(2)

QUESTION 2 Part B

Secondary school pupils' responses	Total No.	Boys	%	Girls	%	Both boys & girls	%
In a mixed class, who do female teachers							
(a) praise more often	252	14	5.6	116	46.0	122	48.4
(b) punish more often for misbehaviour	252	185	73.4	8	3.2	59	23.4
(c) choose more often to answer questions	252	58	23.0	56	22.2	138	54.8
(d) choose more often to lead a debate	252	74	29.4	53	21.0	125	49.6
(e) choose more often to set up a practical in a Science lesson	252	100	39.7	55	21.8	97	38.5
(f) look at more often in class?	252	120	47.6	40	15.9	92	36.5

TABLE 7.L(1)

QUESTION 2 Part A

Junior college pupils' responses	Total No.	Boys	%	Girls	%	Both boys &	%
In a mixed class, who do male teachers							
(a) praise more often	240	16	6.7	126	52.5	98	40.8
(b) punish more often for misbehaviour	240	201	83.8	0	0.0	39	16.3
(c) choose more often to answer questions	240	82	34.2	32	13.3	126	52.5
(d) choose more often to lead a debate	240	85	35.4	33	13.8	122	50.8
(e) choose more often to set up a practical for a Science lesson	240	122	50.8	16	6.7	102	42.5
(f) look at more often in class?	240	83	34.6	36	15.0	121	50.4

TABLE 7.L(2)

QUESTION 2 Part B

Junior college pupils' responses	Total No.	Boys	%	Girls	%	Both boys & girls	%
In a mixed class, who do female teachers							
(a) praise more often	240	20	8.3	121	50.4	99	41.3
(b) punish more often for misbehaviour	240	186	77.5	5	2.1	49	20.4
(c) choose more often to answer questions	240	80	33.3	30	12.5	130	54.2
(d) choose more often to lead a debate	240	77	32.1	37	15.4	126	52.5
(e) choose more often to set up a practical in a Science lesson	240	135	56.3	12	5.0	93	38.8
(f) look at more often in class?	240	82	34.2	45	18.8	113	47.1

select both boys and girls for the posts of school prefect and class monitor while favouring girls for the post of librarian and boys for the post of games captain. Both the secondary school and junior college pupils also showed similarity in their responses to both male and female teachers' behaviour to Question 2 statements (a) to (d) and (f). They tended to favour both boys and girls for 2(c), and 2(d), girls for 2(a) and boys for 2(b). For 2(e), while secondary pupils were of the opinion that male teachers normally selected both boys and girls, and female teachers preferred boys, junior college pupils differed. They felt that both male and female teachers showed a tendency to select boys rather than girls to set up a practical for a Science lesson.

While sextyping was seen to be evident in both male and female teachers' selection of pupils for such school offices as librarian and games captain, sex discrimination was also perceived by the pupils to appear in their classroom teaching. Female teachers, in particular, were seen to show preference for boys for such activities as setting up a practical for a Science lesson. Boys were also seen to be the target for punishment for misbehaviour by both male and female teachers while girls were seen to be praised more often by both male and female teachers.

7.5.2 Pupils' selection of professions/jobs in future

In the informal interviews with primary, secondary and junior college pupils, the observer questioned the

interviewees on their choices of jobs in future. Question 3 of the questionnaire again sought their views on this issue. Table 7.M(1) shows the types of professions/jobs that junior college boys and girls wish to take up after their studies:

TABLE 7.M(1)

JUNIOR COLLEGE BOY AND GIRL PUPILS' CHOICE OF PROFESSIONS/JOBS IN FUTURE

Profession/Job	Boys	Girls
Doctor	23	26
Engineer	12	1
Lawyer	7	25
Computer programmer	7	8
Politician	5	-
Teacher	5	28
Social worker	5	16
Pilot	4	-
Businessman/Business-woman	2	6
Secretary/Stenographer	-	14
Nurse	-	4
Others	8	14
Undecided	10	10
Total	88	152

While 73 out of 142 or 51.4% of junior college girl pupils (66 from those listed above and 7 from the 'Others' category who had selected such professions as accountant, manager, banker, architect, soldier, journalist and psychiatrist) had chosen professions like being doctors, lawyers, engineers, computer programmers and to go into business where males generally dominate in Singapore, the rest of them still aimed for professions/jobs which are traditionally female-oriented such as teaching, social and

secretarial work and nursing. Except for 10 boys who expressed their wish to become social workers and teachers where females normally dominate in the Singapore workforce, the rest of the boys chose male-oriented professions and jobs. In the category of 'Others' for boys, ambitions of becoming lecturer, banker, auditor, accountant, journalist, technician and soldier (2 of them) were expressed by the 8 boys. The remaining 7 girls in the 'Others' category had also opted for traditionally female-oriented jobs as public relations officer, copywriter, designer, telephonist, research worker and food caterers (2 of them).

Table 7.M(2) shows the responses of the secondary boys and girls to Question 3 of the questionnaire. A total number of 252 replies came from, made up of 96 boy and 156 girl responses. Twenty-one (11 boys and 10 girls) compared to twenty (10 boys and 10 girls) of junior college pupils, were as yet, undecided as to what professions or jobs they wished to take up in future.

TABLE 7.M(2)

SECONDARY SCHOOL BOY AND GIRL PUPILS' CHOICE OF PROFESSIONS/JOBS IN FUTURE

Profession/Job	Boys	Girls
Doctor	2	17
Engineer	16	1
Lawyer	13	14
Computer Programmer	6	9
Teacher	1	24
Pilot	16	1
Mechanic	8	-
Soldier	12	1
Policeman/Policewoman	3	4
Businessman/Business-woman	2	4
Technician	1	2
Nurse	-	16
Secretary/Stenographer	-	30
Librarian	-	4
Shop assistant	-	4
Others	5	15
Undecided	11	10
Total	96	156

Compared to junior college boys and girls who represent the more adademically able students, being among the top 20% who were selected to join the elite junior colleges, the secondary pupils of the two observed schools were less able students, as mentioned earlier. The scale of their aspirations, therefore, was generally lower. While half of the junior college boys aimed for the more highly esteemed professions like being doctors, lawyers and engineers, only 30% of secondary boys chose these three professions. Except for one who envisaged himself taking up the teaching profession plus two others: one who wanted to be a designer and the other, a social worker in the 'Others'

category, the rest of the boys including the three in the 'Others' category selected professions/jobs which are generally male-oriented such as driver and sailor (2 of them). As for the secondary girls, only 21.9% chose the top three professions listed compared to 36.6% of junior college girls. A total of 59 or 40.4% out of 146 girls (53 of them who wished to become doctors, lawyers, computer programmers, an engineer, a pilot, a soldier, a technician, policewomen and businesswomen, as listed above, plus 6 in the 'Others' category who wanted to become accountants (2 of them), an architect, an artist, a horticulturist and a journalist), had selected generally male-oriented professions/jobs. However, the rest of the 87 or 59.6% secondary girls (78 who chose jobs listed above and 9 in the 'Others' category who chose to become cooks (2 of them), a public relations officer, a clerk, a designer, an air hostess, a social worker, a telephonist and a housewife), had all selected generally female-oriented jobs.

7.5.3 Pupils' comments and views on male/female equality in Singapore today

Question 4 of the questionnaire was an open-ended question which sought the junior college and secondary pupils' comments and views on any aspect of male/female equality in Singapore today. Only one junior college boy declined to make any comments. Ten, or 11.4%, of the junior college boys who felt that women already have as much freedom as men were adamant in claiming that "there cannot

be complete equality because boys are better at some things and girls are better at others", that "women should look after the children" and that women are the ones "responsible for ensuring the continuation of the future generation". The emphasis on the superiority of the male sex, however, was stressed by only 5 first year boys, one of whom expressed his feelings in these words,

> I think men should still be the head of the family and they should rule over the women. Women should obey their husbands without question.

Another boy felt that:

> ..women should stay at home and let men alone work outside and that all important posts should be held by men as in the Japanese society.

The majority, that is 87.5%, were frank in admitting that although females in Singapore have more freedom than their predecessors, they still do not enjoy equality with men. They were firm in asserting that there should be "no discrimination of the sexes", that despite a greater proportion of women receiving tertiary education, "men still continue to dominate our society". The granting of greater freedom to women and the significant contributions that females can make to their country were expressed in such statements as:

> In Singapore today, both males and females play important roles in the development of the country. Being such a small country, we rely on the help of females to carry out various jobs.
>
> Women should be given more freedom to develop their talents. They have proved themselves

> capable and the economy would benefit immensely from their contributions.
>
> I think in sectors where women are lacking like engineering, they should be given more chance to participate, since women nowadays form a very high percentage of the workforce.

A large number of the boys touched on the inferior position of women in the family and their relegation to childrearing and other menial household chores. One boy wrote,

> Inequality between the sexes still exists in families which still hold the traditional view that females are inferior to males and are more suitable to do menial jobs.

Another pointed out that it is "always the mother who attends to household chores". While they generally admitted that parents tended to allow boys more freedom of movement and placed fewer restrictions on their social life, they also felt that parents were generally more protective towards their daughters and placed greater restrictions, in particular, on their contacts with members with members of the opposite sex. To sum up their comments in favour of equality for females, is this most dramatic remark which came from a first year boy who stated,

> I do not agree with slavery! Men should stop treating ladies as slaves but as their equals.

Of the 152 responses from the junior college girls, 3 did not contribute any views on the issue. A second year pupil whose statement that "Females are made to be in subjection to males and the females are indeed the

weaker sex", reflected the views of the Twenty-two (14.5% of the toatl number of 152) of junior college girls who supported the concept of male superiority and accepted the domination of males over females. Comments like,

> I am against women coming out to work after marriage;
>
> Women should remain in the background;
>
> Men are naturally more capable than women;
>
> In a family, women are the ones who should do the housework, look after the family and be proud of their roles; and,
>
> Men are braver and have higher leadership potential than women;

came from this group of girls.

83.5% of their classmates in both the first and second years, however, disputed the myth of male superiority since they felt that they were as good if not in some cases better academically than their male counterparts in the colleges. Although males are physically bigger and stronger, to them this did not mean that they were more intelligent or more capable than females. Therefore, the consensus of their opinion was that males should not rule over females but should treat them as equals. Not only should there be equal opportunities for all females in employment but employers should adopt a change of attitude towards female employees by appointing them to more responsible posts. Comments like:

> ..prejudice of employers who tend to favour males in

> selection and promotion of employees;
>
> ..employers still hesitant to employ women in certain male-dominated jobs; and,
>
> ..discrimination in salary between the sexes still prevails,

were made by the girls. Discrimination, they pointed out, also prevailed in the university with its quota system which favoured boys, for example, in the faculties of medicine and law. Teachers were found to "advise intelligent female students to go into fields like teaching and business administration".

While a small number bemoaned the lack of female participation in politics, the majority touched on the role of females in the home. As one first year girl wrote,

> Daughters are still required to obey their fathers completely and brothers are always the ones to be served first.

Another first year girl mentioned:

> My mother tends to pamper my brothers more. When they return home at midnight, they are not scolded whereas I'm being nagged at.

While their brothers are often exempted from housework, they are expected to help look after the younger siblings, to lay the table, to wash up the dishes after a meal and to assist their mothers in washing and ironing the clothes. Not only did a number of the girls find the boys "generally chauvinistic" but a couple of their male teachers too. As one second year pointed out,

> Men and women should stop taking on stereotyped roles in jobs and tasks; men should be made by law to help look after the baby and do housework.

Finally, as another second year girl put it,

> If women are to achieve greater freedom and equality, they should aim to be more independent and assertive.

Of the 96 secondary boy pupils, 18 or 18.7% of them did not attempt this question. As for the rest, 8, or 8.3%, strongly expressed their opinion that females should not treated as males because females are "weak", that males are "stronger" and of the two sexes, males are better at solving any type of problems". One Secondary Three boy stressed that "mothers should not go out to work but shouls stay at home and be housewives".

However, 59.4% of the other boys were conscious of the lack of freedom that girls generally suffered from as compared to boys and advocated that parents should grant their daughters greater freedom of movement and that there should be fewer restrictions in socialisation especially with members of the opposite sex. Mothers, they felt, generally tended to "worry about their daughters' safety" and in most homes, "expected their daughters to stay at home and assist them in their housework. Females, they agreed, should also be encouraged to go out to work and they should be given equal pay with men.

An unusual feature of the responses given came

from a group of 13 boys, one from Secondary One, 3 from Secondary Two and 9 from Secondary Three who openly admitted that even as boys, they did not enjoy the same freedom as other boys. Their parents imposed restrictions on their movements as in the example of one Secondary Three boy who wrote that he was "not allowed to see movies or go camping with his friends during the holidays". Another bemoaned the loss of many friends, the consequence of his parents not allowing him to go out with them. A third commented that he wished that his parents were more understanding especially when they often asked him, "Who is that girl who often call you on the phone". No such problems appeared to be faced by the older junior college boys who seemed to encounter fewer resrictions in their movements by their parents.

Of the 156 secondary girls, 131 or 84% were adamant in their insistence on the existence of inequality both in the home and in Singapore society. Women, they felt, play secondary roles to men in Singapore society. Except for a handful of women who had managed to reach the top level of management in the public and private spheres, practically all heads of departments, company directors, managers, government ministers and spiritual leaders are males. While male members of their families generally enjoy greater freedom of communication with members of either sex and are not compelled to assist their mothers in household chores, they, on the other hand, are expected to behave as girls, gentle and obedient. Climbing trees, for example, is

taboo for them. Not only are girls "not allowed to go out as often as boys" since they have to "think of their reputation", as a Secondary Three girl pointd out, girls also "don't have the right to say what they feel and think". Another Secondary Three pupil complained that males "always think that females can't do whatever males can do". Many were of the view that in a marriage, "both parents should share in the housework and in childrearing" and a third Secondary Three pupil stressed that "husbands should not treat their wives like servants". There should also be fairer treatment of daughters and sons should also be encouraged and trained from young to do housework.

Fifteen or 9.6% of the total number of secondary girls expressed their contentment with their families as their parents not only showered affection on them but they also received the same treatment as their brothers. There were no restrictions on their movements and their mothers did not insist on their contributions to household chores. These fifteen girls were unanimous in expressing their satisfaction with their female role and position and did not express sympathy for girls less privileged who sought greater freedom and more equitable treatment for women in the family and in society.

7.6 The Curriculum

7.6.1 Technical and Vocational Education

In a society like Singapore today, the nature,

form and content of education for children is undoubtedly associated with their future roles in adult society. In preparation for their future adult roles, the children are exposed to a whole range of different forms of knowledge which include such basic fundamental skills of literacy and numeracy and the learning of certain specialised skills for many vocational type jobs, all of which are useful and necessary in an industrial society. Education, besides inculcating in children certain dominant cultural values, is also used as a means for national integration and for economic and political purposes as outlined by the government in its contribution to UNESCO's World Survey of Education, Vol. V as follows:

> The main aim of education in Singapore is to develop the potentials of every child physically, mentally and morally to the fullest extent possible in accord with the needs and interests of society by ensuring the optimum acquisition of experience, knowledge and skill, each according to his intelligence, ability, aptitude and interest. In the context of Singapore today, this entails the inculcation of sound habits, values and attitudes which would lead to the development of creativity and loyalty to the Republic; the instilling of the love of freedom, truth and justice with respect for fundamental human rights, appreciation of racial and religious tolerance and acceptance of the democratic way of life; and the propagation of the necessary knowledge and skills needed to carry out the successive stages of economic development; the preparation for changes in society.
>
> (Cited by Waldhauser (66), p.59)

Singapore girls today appear to enjoy equal educational opportunities. The doors of all the main stages of education are open to them without discrimination, except

in the university where a quota system based on sex does prevail, that is, 70% boys to 30% girl students to be selected for medicine yearly. Thus the PAP Government's 1959 election pledge of providing equal educational opportunities to all Singapore citizens regardless of race, language, religion and sex, seems almost entirely confirmed. But the formal content of education, namely the curriculum, denies them the same privileges that boys enjoy in the choice of subjects. The offficial ideology of the form education has taken in the last two decades, has distinctly favoured boys. The important periods in which changes in the curriculum were made which affected secondary pupils generally were 1956, 1968 and 1976. Factors which accounted for these changes and the effects of these changes on secondary pupils were outlined in Chapter 3.

As early as 1956, when the Joint Advisory Council for Apprenticeship Training was set up and the first steps taken to prepare pupils for acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills for vocational and technical type jobs, the artisan and trade courses which were established were geared mainly for boys. A few classes in Typing, Shorthand, Dressmaking and Perming/Hairstyling were started for girls. By 1976, out of the total enrolment of 3,396 pupils in industrial and vocational training institutions, only 143 or 4.2% were girls (67).

Although the government realised the need to prepare its pupils by providing them with the required

knowledge and skills for entry into industry to ensure the republic's economic viability, its programmes and resources were expended on boys. While every Secondary One and Two boy was given the chance to do technical subjects, only 50% of the same cohort of girl pupils since 1969 were accorded that privilege (See Chapter 3). The other 50% of girl pupils were to do Home Economics with emphasis on homemaking, needlework and cookery, subjects which prepare them for their future roles as wives and mothers should they give up paid work after marriage.

The random selection of girl pupils for either the Technical or Home Economics streams, based on their performance in the PSLE, resulted in protests from parents and pupils involvd and in 1976, the Shelley Report recommended that parents be allowed to select the course they preferred for their daughters (See Chapter 3). However, the ratio of 50% girl pupils for Technical and 50% for Home Economics was maintained, and this meant that a number of girl pupils each year continued to pursue a course for which they had neither the aptitude nor the interest.

The world recession in the last four years which has lowered the economic growth rate of such Western countries as the United States and the United Kingdom to the level of 3 to 4 per cent, has not apparently affected Singapore up to 1984. In the first six months of 1984, for example, Singapore's growth rate was 9.7% (68). While the United Kingdom is experiencing the problem of acute

unemployment with over three million unemployed, Singapore instead was facing an acute labour shortage in 1984. The 92,000 strong SCWO spearheaded an island-wide Self and Career Development Programme for women, a one year programme which will cover 12 constituencies, with its focus on encouraging women in their mid-thirties to join the workforce (69). The Minister of State for Trade and Industry, Dr. K.C. Wong, besides calling on employers to take the labour shortage problem seriously and to overcome it by employing older women, also encouraged housewives to return to work (70). Even the President of Singapore joined in to remind Singaporeans of the dangers of continuing to bring in foreign workers who had been making up the country's labour shortfall and to aim for self-reliance (71). This, he felt, could be achieved through a change of attitude in employers towards the employment of older women and the encouragement of married women to return to work. To quote him, "For Singapore, the answer lies in tapping the huge pool of married women who stay at home instead of taking up jobs" (Cited by John (71), p.1).

While on the one hand recognising the contributions that both single and married women can make towards solving the labour shortage problem and ultimately enhancing the country's economic position, on the other hand, the MOE has as recently as September 1984, announced the latest change in the structure of the curriculum for all secondary girl pupils. At a Schools' Council meeting on 8 September 1984, Dr. E.S. Tay, the Minister of State for

Education outlined a revamped Home Economics programme called HOMEC which will be introduced for girls in the first two years of secondary school (72). It will be compulsory for all Secondary One and Two girl pupils to attend classes on cooking, sewing, looking after babies, budgeting and running the home - all geared to prepare them for their future roles as wives, mothers and homemakers. The new programme to begin on 2 January 1986 when the new school year starts, also bars girl pupils from taking up technical subjects for, as Dr. Tay states, "Girls would gain more from HOMEC than from technical studies" (72). In the same meeting, he also bemoaned the fact that girls' schools looked too much like boys' schools. Thus, over the years, legislation has moulded pupils, both boys and girls, along lines which have responded to the country's economic needs and as perceived by its political leaders. The question is, therefore, "Have girls benefitted from this kind of 'dirigisme' in education?"

7.6.2 Arts and Science streams in secondary schools

Teachers, both males and females, are indisputably powerful forces of influence to the pupils they teach. Not only do pupils receive numerous messages from the teacher, they also make many assessments about the nature of a subject by virtue of the sex of the teacher (73). In Singapore schools, Science, that is Physics, Chemistry and Physical Science are taught mainly by male teachers, therefore, messages about sex and Science are conveyed to

the pupils. The pupils in the upper forms of secondary schools also become aware of the division of pupils into the Arts and Science streams and note that male teachers normally teach the more 'complicated subjects' (73). Thus, to a certain extent, the subject choices of girls may be influenced by the models they see before them. The dominance of male teachers for Science subjects and the relatively small number of female teachers who teach such 'hard' or abstract Sciences like Physics, Chemistry or Technical Drawing, may result in some girls forming the impression that these subjects can only be mastered by males and they even doubt their own ability of succeeding in these areas. Needlework and Cookery appear to be evidently girls' subjects and are normally taught by female teachers. Unlike Science, the practical skills of these subjects form part of the home environment of girls.

In secondary schools in Singapore, as in most parts of the world today, girls still do more Arts subjects than Science and opt for practical subjects like Art, Cookery and Needlework rather than Technical Drawing, Woodwork or Metalwork. Yearly, the enrolment of female students for the Arts and Social Science course at the local university (See Tables 5.G and 5.H), had remained way above their numbers for all the other courses. As for the Sciences in schools, Human Social Biology is popular with girls generally. As long as subjects like Home Economics and Office Practice are made available in schools, there

will be the tendency for girls to select these courses which are seen as absolutely appropriate and necessary for their future lives. However, these courses rarely provide girls with skills that are really marketable, therefore, their chances of seeking economic independence in the future are, in fact, hampered.

In Singapore, the Science/Arts dichotomy starts at the Secondary Three level. Sceondary One and Two pupils attend a general course where they are taught both arts subjects and General Science. To qualify for acceptance to the Science stream, besides passing their semestral examinations, Secondary Two pupils must perform very well in General Science and Elementary Mathematics as these subjects are used as the criteria by schools to select pupils for the Science stream. In most schools in Singapore, due to the shortage of Science teachers, the ratio of Science to Arts classes is approximately 1:3.

During the author's round of classroom observations, 8 secondary classes from two secondary schools were visited. The only Secondary Four class observed was an Arts stream class. From these observed classes, figures of the breakdown of the classes into Science and Arts streams and the figures of Secondaries One and Two pupils who were taught either Technical subjects or Home Economics were collected and shown in Table 7.N below:

TABLE 7.N

BREAKDOWN OF SECONDARY PUPILS OF THE 8 OBSERVED CLASSES INTO ARTS AND SCIENCE STREAMS

CLASSES	Total No.	Science Stream		Arts Stream		Pupils taking Technical subjects		Pupils taking Home Economics	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
SEC. 1	52	(General		21	31)	21	15	0	16
SEC. 2	71	(course		21	50)	21	25	0	25
SEC. 3	97	18	17	17	45	17	15	0	30
SEC. 4	31			19	12	14	3	0	12

In line with MOE's policy, all the boys in both Secondaries One and Two do Technical subjects while half the enrolment of girls in each of the two forms do Technical subjects while the other half do Home Economics. In Secondary Three, for example, of the total number of 62 pupils in the Arts stream, 45 or 72.6% are girls. For both Secondaries Three and Four, out of a total number of 93 pupils in the Arts stream, 57, or 61.3%, are girls.

Table 7.O which follows, gives a clear indication od the subjects taken by Secondary Three and Four pupils in the Arts stream:

TABLE 7.0

SUBJECT CHOICES OF SECONDARIES THREE AND FOUR PUPILS OF THE 8 OBSERVED CLASSES IN THE ARTS STREAM

SUBJECTS	Secondary Three			Secondary Four		
	Boys	Girls	Girls' % of Girls' Total	Boys	Girls	Girls' % of Girls' Total
English Language	17	45	100.0	19	12	100.0
English Literature	17	45	100.0	19	12	100.0
History	10	20	44.4	19	6	50.0
Geography	11	25	55.6	19	8	66.7
Elementary Mathematics	17	45	100.0	19	12	100.0
Art	13	45	100.0	5	7	58.3
Food/Nutrition	0	30	66.7	0	12	100.0
Technical Education	17	15	33.3	14	3	25.0
Second Language	17	45	100.0	19	12	100.0

In Secondary Three, both boys and girls in the Arts and Science streams do a total of seven subjects. Four compulsory subjects they have to take are English Language, English Literature, Elementary Mathematics and Second Language, that is, either Chinese, Malay or Tamil depending on which ethnic group they belong to. Secondary Four Arts stream pupils also take a total of seven subjects of which English language, Elementary Mathematics and Second Language are compulsory subjects.

Science stream pupils in Secondary Three also take a total of seven subjects. Table 7.P below shows the set of core subjects these pupils do:

TABLE 7.P

SUBJECTS TAKEN BY SECONDARY THREE

SCIENCE STREAM PUPILS OF THE 8 OBSERVED CLASSES

SUBJECTS	SECONDARY THREE		
	Boys	Girls	Girls' % of Girls' Total
English Language	18	17	100.0
English Literature	18	17	100.0
E. Mathematics	18	17	100.0
Additional Mathematics	18	17	100.0
Physical Science	18	17	100.0
Human Social Biology	18	17	100.0
Second Language	18	17	100.0

7.6.3 Subject choices of pupils in GCE 'O' and 'A' Level Examinations

An examination of the subject preferences of Singapore pupils in the GCE 'O' Level Examinations are given in Table 7.Q. In all the three years selected, the number and percentage of boys taking 'hard' Science subjects such as Physics and Chemistry and even Physical Science, were higher than those of girls (74). However, General Science, Biology and Human Social Biology showed larger number of girl candidates. While girls outnumbered boys, too, in Elementary Mathematics, History, Geography and Art, more boys sat for Additional Mathematics, Woodwork and Metalwork. While in 1974 none of the boys in the two secondary observed

TABLE 7.Q

SUBJECT CHOICES OF SINGAPORE SCHOOL CANDIDATES IN THE GCE "O" LEVEL EXAMINATIONS IN 1974,1979 AND 1983.

	1974				1979				1983			
Subjects	Total	Boys	Girls	Girl %	Total	Boys	Girls	Girl %	Total	Boys	Girls	Girl %
English Lang.	25,401	12,478	12,923	50.9	25,216	12,137	13,079	51.9	30,819	15,342	15,477	50.2
English Lit.	19,417	7,995	11,422	58.8	18,036	7,551	10,485	58.1	19,107	8,290	10,817	56.6
History	8,298	3,308	4,990	60.1	6,804	2,684	4,120	60.6	8,070	3,254	4,816	59.7
Geography	9,149	4,357	4,792	52.4	8,261	3,871	4,390	53.1	7,503	3,495	4,008	53.4
E.Maths	23,078	11,473	11,605	50.3	24,498	11,725	12,773	52.1	29,799	14,788	15,011	50.4
A.Maths	5,345	3,216	2,129	39.8	7,380	4,327	3,053	41.4	10,210	6,148	4,062	39.8
Gen.Science	5,683	2,590	3,093	54.4	2,489	979	1,510	60.7	2,711	1,263	1,448	53.4
Physics	4,003	2,670	1,333	33.3	0	0	2	100.0	3,963	2,690	1,273	32.1
Chemistry	3,170	1,876	1,294	40.8	0	0	2	100.0	3,125	1,959	1,166	37.3
Biology	5,715	1,703	4,012	70.2	6,684	2,809	3,875	58.0	5,641	2,205	3,436	60.9
Human Soc.Bio	3,787	1,308	2,479	65.5	6,899	2,453	4,446	64.4	8,846	2,891	5,955	67.3
Phy.Science	6,355	3,969	2,386	37.5	11,550	7,164	4,386	38.0	10,994	6,981	4,013	36.5
Art	7,014	2,938	4,076	58.1	6,229	2,527	3,702	59.4	7,471	3,149	4,322	57.9
Woodwork	942	683	259	27.5	1,230	894	336	27.3	977	703	274	28.0
Metalwork	2,717	2,188	529	19.5	2,905	2,166	739	25.4	6,911	5,595	1,316	19.0
Food/Nutrition	878	0	878	100.0	1,174	27	1,147	97.7	994	25	969	97.5
Commerce	1,667	834	833	50.0	1,952	724	1,228	62.9	2,096	575	1,521	72.6

Source:Ministry of Education,Singapore,1974,1979 and 1983.

schools opted for the Food and Nutrition course, in 1979 and 1983 there were 27 and 25 boy candidates respectively who took this subject in the 'O' Level Examinations.

The higher percentage of male candidates, that is, approximately 60% to 40% of female candidates in Physics, Chemistry and Physical science, placed the boys in a more advantageous position than girls who sought entry, for example, to courses in technical colleges. As mentioned in Chapter 5, Section 5.4, holders of the GCE 'O' Level certificates are required to have at least a credit pass in a relevant Science or Technical subject in order to be considered for admission. Table 5.I shows that for the period 1976/77, male students outnumbered females by 79.6% while in the 1983/84 session, the percentage was 75.3% with an increase of only 1,179 female students in the six-year span. Their Science/Technical-oriented background also stood boys who went out to work in good stead. Industries are more likely to absorb them than females who lack scientific knowledge or technical skills.

The MOE's policy since 1969 of allowing all Secondaries One and Two boy pupils to pursue Technical Education but granting the privilege to only 50% of the same cohort of girl pupils, is reflected in the low percentage of girl pupils in Woodwork and Metalwork. Girls are, therefore, placed in a disadvantaged position for entry to technical colleges since they are without the necessary technical qualification stipulated by these institutions.

For those girls unable to qualify for admission to junior colleges but have to seek employment, their scope is narrower compared to boys, as stated earlier. It was and still is not unusual then that they turn to such female-oriented jobs like nursing and secretarial work or to labour-intensive jobs in factories which do not require a Technical or Science-oriented background.

Table 7.R shows the subject choices of candidates for the GCE 'A' Level Examinations. Only figures for the 1979 and 1983 examinations were available from the MOE Examinations Section.

TABLE 7.R

SUBJECT CHOICES OF SINGAPORE SCHOOL CANDIDATES IN THE GCE 'A' LEVEL EXAMINATIONS, IN 1979 AND 1983

SUBJECTS	1979				1983			
	Total No.	Boys No.	Girls No.	Girls % of Total	Total No.	Boys No.	Girls No.	Girls % of Total
Eng. Lit.	1,067	229	838	78.5	999	267	732	73.3
History	868	276	592	68.2	711	231	480	67.5
Geography	1,019	307	712	69.9	397	119	278	70.0
Economics	4,526	1,582	2,944	65.0	4,408	1,705	2,703	61.3
Maths. A	370	214	156	42.2	329	216	113	34.3
Maths. B	2,543	1,391	1,152	45.3	2,948	1,760	1,188	40.3
Pure Maths.	103	78	25	24.3	14	8	6	42.9
Physics	1,245	869	376	30.2	2,207	1,512	695	31.5
Chemistry	885	589	296	33.4	1,484	903	581	39.2
Biology	1,328	692	636	47.9	1,134	633	501	44.2
Physical Sc.	1,600	853	747	46.7	456	297	159	34.9
Art	72	13	59	81.9	118	40	78	66.1
Principles of Accounts	994	198	796	80.1	1,806	416	1,390	77.0
Management of Business	-	-	-	-	1,810	447	1,363	75.3

(Source: MOE, Singapore. 1979 and 1983)

In both years, 1979 and 1983, girls dominated in s such subjects as English Literature, History, Geography, Economics, Art, Principles of Accounts and in Management of Business in 1983. In the three Mathematics papers, Mathematics A, Mathematics B and Pure Mathematics, boys outnumbered girls. Where boys outnumbered girls in Physics, Chemistry and Physical Science in the 'O' Level Examinations as shown in Table 7.Q, in Table 7.R above, they again outnumbered them in these three subjects as well as in Biology.

The higher percentages of boy candidates in all the Science subjects have resulted in the higher percentages of male student enrolment both in the technical colleges and even in the university. Tables 5.G and 5.H have shown the marked increase in total female enrolment in the last two decades especially in the university but, they were concentrated in the Arts and Social Science course. Successful completion in this course normally leads to teaching, social work or junior executive appointments which not only limit their scope of advancement due to their lack of technical skills and scientific knowledge, but also command lower financial returns and prestige in comparison to such professions as engineers, accountants and doctors. The teaching profession does not command high esteem even among Singapore teachers. In the author's questionnaire survey conducted in 1983 (75), the respondents were asked if they felt that teachers in Singapore were generally highly respected by the public. Of the 102 teacher respondents, 75

or 73.5% felt that the public accorded them low respect.

Both in schools and public examinations as investigated above, Singapore boys appear to be more scientifically and technically inclined than girls, opting for 'hard' Science and Technical subjects while girls go for Arts subjects. While pupils' choices may be subject to influences by parents, teachers or society, the educational system is so structured as to contribute to the Arts/Science and Technical/Non-Technical dichotomy. The concentration of male teachers in the Sciences and Mathematics and female teachers in the teaching of History, Geography, Art and Home Economics together with the discouragement of girls from taking Technical subjects, have indisputably placed female secondary pupils in a disadvantaged position compared to boys. The curriculum, overt and hidden, therefore, reveals various forms of sextyping and discrimination in practice in Singapore schools. As a corollary to this, it might be expected that curriculum materials, particularly textbooks, reveal similar imbalances. Thus an examination of whether sex-role stereotyping and discrimination exist in the textbooks used by pupils in secondary and primary schools today and in the past quarter century, will be discussed in the next section.

7.7 Survey of textbooks used in Singapore schools

As mentioned earlier in Section 7.1, to discourage the practice of sex-role stereotyping and sex discrimination

in education, Western countries like the United States and the United Kingdom, for example, have passed laws (America: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the United Kingdom: the Sex Discrimination Act 1975), to this end. While the American legislation, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, deals directly with sexist materials in education, the Sex Discrimination Act in the United Kingdom does not. Other countries in Europe, for example, Sweden and in Asia, one country, India, have also implemented programmes and projects which aim at providing educational equity and reducing sex-role stereotyping in such areas as the development and evaluation of curricula, textbooks and other educational materials. Studies by British writers, for example, Allen et al (76), Lobban (29), Byrne (3), Scott (72) and Spender and Sarah (77), to name a few, have pointed out the prevalence of sex-role stereotyping and discriminatory practices in British schools and classrooms as well as in textbooks and learning materials used by pupils. However, a constant check on sexist trends in curricula, textbooks and learning materials used in British schools, is made by the EOC which is empowered with monitoring education. The Children's Rights Workshop (78) has conducted a survey on sexism in children's literature and organisations like the Women's Research and Resource Centre, now the Feminist Library and Information Centre, have played an important part in providing examples of sexist materials.

Not only does Singapore not have legislation on sex discrimination but there is also no watchdog committee to oversee the practice of sexist trends in education or in the evaluation of curricula, textbooks and learning materials used in all schools. There is a paucity of literature on such topics as sex discrimination and sex-role stereotyping in schools or on bias in textbooks and learning materials. To date, as far as the author is aware, no study on these aspects has been made. Thus, in this section, an attempt will be made to survey some of the textbooks used in Singapore schools to establish whether sex-role stereotyping and discrimination are present in them.

Altogether, a total of 39 textbooks made up of 2 English textbooks used by students preparing for their GCE 'O' Level English paper, 1 Primary Six Science textbook and 36 primary texts (Readers, Course Books, Work Books and Compostion Practice), will be investigated. It was over two decades ago that the first textbook entitled Graduated Exercises in English (Part I) was used (79). The second, entitled Practical English for the Certificate (Part II), was used in the late 1960s and early 1970s (80). The Science textbook which helps prepare Primary Six pupils for the PSLE Science paper, was the set text in use more than five years ago (81). The 36 primary texts are currently in use in all primary schools in Singapore. An examination of texts used in the past and at present will show whether sexist pictures and sex-role presentation were present in books used in the last quarter century and if so, whether

they still persist today.

7.7.1 Methodology

The survey of the 39 textbooks out of a total of 77 textbooks (50.6%) in use in the respective subject areas and level (82) will focus specifically on firstly, the frequency rate of the gender of the main character or characters used by the authors and secondly, the frequency rate of male and female figures in the pictures used. The following criteria are applied in the analysis of the texts. Four categories namely, 'Male-centred', 'Female-centred', 'Male/Female-centred' and 'Neuter' are used, for example, to classify essay topics and exercises given. A passage is 'Male-centred' when the central character or characters mentioned are males and taking the central action in the plot; an exercise or essay topic given is 'Male-centred' when the main character or characters are of the male gender or when the pronoun 'he' is used to imply both male and female. Meanwhile, a passage is 'Female-centred' when the central character or characters portrayed are female or females and it is 'Male/Female-centred' when both sexes are referred to. When neither gender is used or when the subject matter is of general interest with no reference to either sex, it is classified under 'Neuter'. Below are examples of exercises and their classifications:

Example 1. He is one of those people who is always to be depended upon. (Male-centred)
Example 2. She sang three very pretty songs. (Female-centred)

Example 3. It is the desire of every boy and girl that when they grow up, they will visit distant lands. (Male/Female-centred)
Example 4. The prize money was divided among the five winners. (Neuter)

The same procedure is applied to pictures used by the authors. The pictures are classified as 'Male-centred' when they comprise the figure of a male or figures of males; are 'Female-centred' when they comprise all female figures and are 'Male/Female-centred' when both sexes are present in them.

For the first English text, the book is divided into 3 categories: passages, compostion topics for written work and exercises for written work. For the second text, which is made up of 4 sections, the contents of Section One and Two are divided into 3 categories: passages, exercises for written work and examples given; the content of Section Three are divided into: passages and composition topics for written work while the contents of Section Four are divided into: passages, examples given, exercises for oral work, exercises for written work and composition topics for written work. For the Primary Six Science book, emphasis will be on the pictures used to illustrate experiments that are carried out. For the New English Series for Primary Education (NESPE) and the Primary English Programme (PEP) series, the topics and pictures used in their readers, course and work books will be analysed. Finally, the topics and pictures used in the NESPE and PEP compostion books will be investigated, as with the other textbooks, for the

extent, if any, of sex-role stereotyping and distribution of Male or Female or Male/Female-centred topics used (83). In the analysis of pictures used in all the textbooks except for Graduated Exercises in English (Part I) and Practical English for the Certificate (Part Two) which had no pictures, the neuter gender does not appear. This is because they are not present in the textbooks.

7.7.2 Analysis of textbooks used in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s

Graduated Exercises in English (Part I) was widely used in both government and mission schools throughout the 1950s. At that period, Singapore was still under British administration and the textbooks in use for subjects like English, English Literature, History, Geography and Science were mainly inported from the United Kingdom and written by British authors. A content analysis of these books would reveal, for example, passages and exercises selected reflecting the cultural norms of the British. The plots were generally set in British or Western environments and the main character or characters were either British or in a few instances, European. In the analysis of the distribution of the exercises used in the textbook, the four categories for classification mentioned in the previous section, are applied. The textbook consists of 127 pages.

TABLE 7.S

DISTRIBUTION OF EXERCISES IN GRADUATED EXERCISES IN ENGLISH (PART I)

Types of Exercises	Total No.	M-c No.	F-c No.	M/F -c No.	N No.	F-c % of Total	F-c % of M-c Total
Passages	116	81	6	5	24	5.2	7.4
Composition topics for written work	134	46	8	9	71	6.0	17.4
Exercises for written work	244	100	10	4	130	4.1	10.0

KEY

M-c = Male-centred
F-c = Female-centred
M/F-c = Male/Female-centred
N = Neuter

As shown in Table 7.S, less than 10% of the total of each of the three categories in the textbook, is 'Female-centred'. In all the three categories, the percentages of 'Female-centred' exercises to 'Male-centred' exercises fall below 20%. Although the Composition topics and exercises for written work are predominantly 'Neuter' in format, 34.3% of the total in the first case and 41.0% of the toatl in the second case and 69.8% of the total of the passages selected, are 'Male-centred'. The uneven distribution of 'Male' to 'Female-centred' exercises given, for example, in composition topics, is evident on page 12 where out of the 5 topics given 3 are 'Male-centred' and 2 'Neuter':

Ex.14 Write a humourous letter to a friend, giving an account of your first attempts to learn how to swim. (Neuter)

Ex.15 Describe in detail the appearance of some person whom you know very well. Do not exaggerate for the sake of effect, but try to make your description as accurate and lifelike as possible. (Neuter)

Ex.16 Tell the story of how Theseus slew the Minotaur. If you do not know the details, look them up in a book of reference. (Male-centred)

Ex.17 Explain as though to some one who has no knowledge of the subject, how to render first aid to a person who has been knocked down and had his leg broken in a street accident. (Male-centred)

Ex.18 Write a composition between an extraordinarily honest customer and a no less honest shopkeeper, in which the customer, after a long argument, manages to convince the shopkeeper that the latter has given him too much change, only to find when he gets outside that the shopkeeper was right after all; (Male-centred)

and in exercises for written work on page 89 where all exercises are 'Male-centred':

Ex.6 Say which of the following are loose and which periodic sentences, and convert the loose into periodic and the periodic into loose:

(a) He still admitted his veterans to the same degree of intimacy, when he had risen to higher consideration, although he affected more state. (Male-centred)

(b) He was embarked with his men in a common adventure, and nearly on terms of equality, since he held his commission by no legal warrant. (Male-centred)

(c) After the few years of repose which succeeded the conquest, his adventurous spirit impelled him to that dreary march across Chiapa. (Male-centred)

(d) There was no advanturous cavalier more deeply filled with the spirit of romantic enterprise than Hernando Cortes, of all the band whom Spain, in the sixteenth century, sent forth on the career of discovery and conquest. (Male-centred)

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Practical English for the Certificate (Part Two) was used by students preparing for the GCE 'O' Level Examinations. This was another textbook imported from the United Kingdom. As with the previous textbook, the passages and exercises chosen reflected mainly British culture and norms and set in

Western environments. However, some references were made to the East with one passage on 'Road and Rail in India'; one on 'Firewalkers in Singapore'; one describing the scene by the Yangtze in China and two on Malaya: one a description of a Malayan seaside scene and the other, a description of the killing of a crocodile by a Malay. Except for a passage entitled 'Fitness to Survive' by a Japanese author, the rest of the passages were written by Western authors. In the exercises, reference was made to Malaya 9 times, to Hong Kong 4 times and once to Singapore. The use of Chinese names, for example, appeared only 3 times throughout the book.

The textbook (275 pages in all) is in 4 sections: Section One dealing with the basic techniques in precis or summary writing; Section Two is entitled Language Structure; Section Three covers exercises on comprehension, precis and composition practice while Section Four contains exercises and passages for oral work together with 2 test papers. The same classification used in Table 7.S for the breakdown of the exercises and passages into the four categories, is applied here. Tables 7.T(1), 7.T(2), 7.T(3) and 7.T(4) which follow, show the distribution of exercises in each section of the textbook:

TABLE 7.T(1)

DISTRIBUTION OF EXERCISES IN SECTION ONE OF PRACTICAL ENGLISH FOR THE CERTIFICATE (PART TWO)

Type of Exercises	Total No.	M-c No.	F-c No.	M/F -c No.	N No.	F-c % of Total	F-c % of M-c Total
Passages	15	6	1	2	6	6.7	16.7
Exercises for written work	95	36	0	6	53	0.0	0.0
Examples given	50	23	5	1	21	10.0	21.7

TABLE 7.T(2)

DISTRIBUTION OF EXERCISES IN SECTION TWO OF PRACTICAL ENGLISH FOR THE CERTIFICATE (PART TWO)

Type of Exercises	Total No.	M-c No.	F-c No.	M/F -c No.	N No.	F-c % of Total	F-c % of M-c Total
Passages	2	1	0	1	0	0.0	0.0
Examples given	750	293	74	34	349	9.9	25.3
Exercises for written work	799	258	86	15	440	10.8	33.3

TABLE 7.T(3)

DISTRIBUTION OF EXERCISES IN SECTION THREE OF PRACTICAL ENGLISH FOR THE CERTIFICATE (PART TWO)

Type of Exercises	Total No.	M-c No.	F-c No.	M/F -c No.	N No.	F-c % of Total	F-c % of M-c Total
Passages	31	5	1	1	24	3.2	20.0
Composition topics for written work	62	2	2	4	54	3.2	100.0

TABLE 7.T(4)

DISTRIBUTION OF EXERCISES IN SECTION FOUR OF PRACTICAL ENGLISH FOR THE CERTIFICATE (PART TWO)

Type of Exercises	Total No.	M-c No.	F-c No.	M/F -c No.	N No.	F-c % of Total	F-c % of M-c Total
Passages	11	6	0	4	1	0.0	0.0
Examples given	2	2	0	0	0	0.0	0.0
Exercises for oral work	39	12	4	4	19	19.3	33.3
Exercises for written work	28	14	1	0	13	3.6	7.1
Composition topics for written work	40	4	0	0	36	0.0	0.0

Except for two cases, that is, firstly, in Section Two in the category of Exercises for written work and secondly, in Section Four in the category of Exercises for oral work where the 'Female-centred' percentage is over 10% of the total number of exercises given, the rest of the exercises in the four sections reveal 'Female-centred' percentages of well below 10% of the category. In these two categories the 'Female-centred' percentages of 'Male-centred' total rise above 30%. An exception is the category of Composition topics for written work in Section Three where the 'Female-centred' percentage of 'Male-centred' total is 100%. In the four sections, of the total of 11 types of exercises classified, 5 of them are predominantly 'Male-centred' while the remaining 6 are predominantly 'Neuter'.

The 'hard' Science subjects especially Physics and

Chemistry and even Physical Science, which are taught almost exclusively by male university graduates in the upper forms in Singapore secondary schools and by non-university graduate male teachers in the lower forms in Singapore secondary schools, and General Science in primary schools, reinforce girls' perceptions concerning their ability and the appropriateness of their succeeding in these subjects. The root of the message that they receive concerning the structure of a subject is to be found in the textbooks they use right from the primary stage. An example of a Science textbook in which 'Male-centred' pictures are widely used by the author to illustrate experiments being carried out is namely, the New PSLE Science Singapore Primary Six texbook which contains 243 pages. Table 7.U shows the distribution of pictures used in the textbook:

TABLE 7.U

DISTRIBUTION OF PICTURES IN NEW PSLE

SCIENCE SINGAPORE PIMARY SIX

Total No. of pictures used	M-c No.	F-c No.	M/F-c No.	F-c % of Total	F-c % of M-c No.
48	38	6	4	12.5	15.8

Not only do the pictures give the impression that Science is a subject more for boys than girls by the high percentage, that is, 79.2 % of 'Male-centred' picture used but they also display the strengths and weaknesses of the characters portrayed (See Appendix 7.E). Males are pictured

in the book carrying out activities which normally require strength as on page 7 in a lesson on 'Common Machines Used Every Day' where two men, one pulling the pulley and the other pushing the wheelbarrow, are explained as using machines which require much force to operate. In the same section, is a picture of girl using the lever. The author's explanation of the lever is that it is used for moving objects, allows us to work more easily and when using the lever, the amount of force required to move an object, is less than its weight. This picture, therefore, implies that females can use this machine since not much force is required. Boys are also pictured carrying out experiments, for example: - using sticks and a rope to show that without the rope, a boy is unable to pull two sticks each held tightly by his two friends, but with a rope tied round the two sticks, he is able to do so thus, proving that a small force can be used to overcome a bigger force, on page 19; using a bare wire connected to the terminals of a battery or dry cell to illustrate that the wire will become hot and remain hot as long as electricity flows through it, on page 35; using the ball and ring apparatus to prove that solids expand when heated, on page 51; and using a circuit tester to find out whether it works on a mystery box with nails on the top, on page 87.

The remaining 5 'Female-centred' pictures in the textbook (See Appendix 7.E) show: 2 pictures of a girl, in the first picture, peering into a black box in a dark room

and, in the second picture, shining a torch through one of the slits on top of the black box, on page 62. This is an experiment to show that we cannot see without light in a dark room. The next two pictures on page 65 show a girl, in the first picture, standing before a mirror, holding a piece of paper with the words 'Modern Science' written on it and, in the second picture, with her reflection on the mirrror and the words 'Modern Science' laterally inverted. These two pictures are used to illustrate images in a mirror. The last picture touches on the topic of measuring the length of objects and a girl is shown seated placing ice-cream sticks of equal length across a table to measure it, on page 197. Where the pictures of males not only reflect use of strength, movement and creativity, pictures of females show them involved in experiments that are dull, unchallenging and in which they are comparatively inactive.

The four pictures which depict both males and females (See Appendix 7.E) reveal, as in the first picture on page 28, the typical sex-role stereotyping of males and females with father using a drill to make a hole and mother in her apron, beating eggs with an egg-beater. This is to illustrate the direction of motion in the lesson on the use of gears to change the direction of force or motion. The remaining 3 pictures show an uneven distribution of the sexes. In the first picture on page 75, 3 boys and a girl are standing in different directions with an alarm clock placed on a stool in the middle of the room. When the alarm is set off, all four people can hear the ringing sound thus,

proving that sound travels in all directions. The next two pictures to illustrate the topic on the position of people, show firstly, four people queuing for tickets at a ticket booth. Three of the four people are males. Together with a male ticket seller, there are four males and one female in the picture, as on page 173. The last picture on the lower half of the same page, depicts a family scene: a father, mother and three children. Mother is reading to two children while the toddler is playing by himself. Again, as in the 3 mixed-sex pictures mentioned earlier, an imbalance of the sexes prevail with 3 male to 2 female figures in this picture. This last picture also highlights the typical role of the mother as teacher, comforter and companion and the one solely responsible for nurturing the children while the father is seen as detached and removed from these obligations.

7.7.3 Textbooks in use at present

For two decades after Singapore had obtained self-government, primary and secondary schools continued to rely heavily on textbooks written by foreign authors and published by foreign companies. However, in 1980, the Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore (CDIS) was set up by the MOE to publish textbooks for use in all Singapore schools. Besides aiming at producing standard texts for use in government and government-aided schools, the CDIS was also to draw upon Singaporean culture and norms and where possible, local settings for passages and exercises selected

for the texts. Figures and names depicting the main ethnic groups were to be used as often as possible.

Teachers, both university and non-university graduates, were seconded to the department and various teams were formed to produce English, History, Geography, Science, Mathematics and Art textbooks. For the English section, two teams set about compiling textbooks each for the primary classes. The first team is known as the NESPE Project Team while the second team is called the PEP Project Team. To date, both teams have produced 4 sets of textbooks each. Principals and teachers of primary schools, however, are allowed to choose either of the series they prefer for their schools. A survey of these 8 sets of textbooks in the areas of topics selected, sex of the main character or characters portrayed and pictures used to illustrate, for example, stories or points of grammar, will be carried out to establish whether sex-role stereotyping and discrimination in written form and pictures used in visual form, are present in these texts.

The first set of textbooks to be analysed consist of Readers, Course Books and Work Books compiled by the NESPE Team. So far, the team has produced 2 books for each of the two semesters covering Primaries One to Five. Only the 'A' or first semester series of the Readers, Course Books and Work Books will be analysed. The distribution of topics for each level, that is, Primaries One to Five, is presented in Table 7.V(1). Table7.V(2) shows the

distribution of pictures used in the textbooks in the five levels. The four categories 'Male-centred', 'Female-centred', 'Male/Female-centred' and 'Neuter' which were applied in analysing the two English textbooks and the Science textbook earlier, are also applied in analysing the topics, exercises and pictures used in the NESPE and PEP series. In a number of sets of textbooks, for example, the NESPE Course Books, the NESPE Work Books, the PEP Readers, the PEP Textbooks and the PEP Work Books, generally 'Male-centred' and 'Female-centred' exercises were given, therefore, the tables that show the breakdown of exercises given contain only 'Male-centred' and 'Female-centred' categories. The analysis of pictures used in the PEP Composition Skills and Practice, as shown on Table 7.AC(2), also contain only 'Male-centred' and 'Female-centred categories.

TABLE 7.V(1)

DISTRIBUTION OF TOPICS IN NESPE READERS (A) SERIES

Level of Textbooks	No. of Pages	Total No.	M-c No.	F-c No.	M/F -c No.	N No.	F-c % of Total	F-c % of M-c Total
Primary One	50	8	1	0	7	0	0.0	0.0
Primary Two	60	6	2	2	1	1	33.3	100.0
Primary Three	59	8	3	2	0	3	25.0	66.7
Primary Four	68	7	3	3	1	0	42.9	100.0
Primary Five	74	8	7	1	0	0	12.5	14.3

TABLE 7.V (2)

DISTRIBUTION OF PICTURES USED IN

NESPE READERS (A) SERIES

Level of Textbooks	No. of Pages	Total No.	M-c No.	F-c No.	M/F -c No.	F-c % of Total	F-c % of M-c Total
Primary One	50	56	20	3	33	5.4	15.0
Primary Two	60	50	12	18	20	36.0	150.0
Primary Three	59	46	26	6	14	13.0	23.1
Primary Four	68	44	24	11	9	25.0	45.8
Primary Five	74	45	33	2	10	4.4	6.1

According to Table 7.V (1), except for Primary One where there is only 1 'Male-centred' topic and for Primary Two where there are 2, the other three levels show that 'Male-centred' topics selected by the authors dominate the textbooks. In Primaries Two and Four, there is equal distribution of 'Male-centred' and 'Female-centred' topics but for Primary One, not a single 'Female-centred' topic is present.

Table 7.V(2) shows that 'Male/Female-centred' pictures are more prevalent in the Primaries One and Two levels but, as in the topics, male pictures dominate in the Primaries Three, Four and Five textbooks. In the Primaries One, Three and Five textbooks the percentages of 'Female-centred' to 'Male-centred' pictures are below 25%. It is only in the Primary Two textbook that more female than male pictures are depicted, the ratio being 3 'Female-centred' to 2 'Male-centred' pictures.

As for the second type of textbooks known as

Course Books, Table 7.W(1) shows the distribution of pictures used while Table 7.W(2) shows the distribution of exercises used in this set of textbooks.

TABLE 7.W(1)

DISTRIBUTION OF PICTURES USED IN

NESPE COURSE BOOKS (A) SERIES

Level of Textbooks	No. of Pages	Total No.	M-c No.	F-c No.	M/F -c No.	F-c % of Total	F-c % of M-c Total
Primary One	52	160	63	37	60	23.1	58.7
Primary Two	60	162	79	36	47	22.2	45.6
Primary Three	66	218	88	56	74	25.7	63.6
Primary Four	82	202	117	40	45	19.8	34.2
Primary Five	80	135	86	21	28	15.6	24.4

TABLE 7.W(2)

DISTRIBUTION OF EXERCISES IN

NESPE COURSE BOOKS (A) SERIES

Level of Textbooks	No. of Pages	Total No.	M-c No.	F-c No.	F-c % of Total	F-c % of M-c Total
Primary One	52	187	104	83	44.4	79.8
Primary Two	60	173	110	63	36.4	57.3
Primary Three	66	287	161	126	43.9	78.3
Primary Four	82	480	336	144	30.0	42.9
Primary Five	80	536	440	96	17.9	21.8

Table 7.W(1) shows that more pictures of males are depicted in all the five levels. Though more pictures of females are used in this set of textbooks, in each level, compared to the Readers, they still make up less than a quarter of the total of the pictures used in 4 lvels except

for the Primary Three textbook which just manages to be over 25% of the total. However, the percentages of 'Female-centred' to 'Male-centred' pictures in the first three levels have risen above 45% in each case.

In Table 7.W(2), in all the 5 levels, 'Male-centred' exercises dominate. The widest disparities are evident in the Primaries Four and Five levels. Primaries One and Three, however, show a more proportionate distribution of 'Male-centred' and 'Female-centred' exercises of the total. In fact, except for Primaries Four and Five where the 'Female-centred' percentages to 'Male-centred' totals are below 50%, in the first three levels, the female percentages have increased to over 50% in each level.

Sex-role stereotyping is prominent in a number of pictures used in these textbooks. The teacher and the nurse are depicted as females while the Principal, the bus driver and the policemen are males. There is also a picture of mother carrying and fondling a baby while father looks happily on, in the Primary One textbook. In the Primary Two textbook, in 12 separate instances, the teacher is a female. On page 24, the female teacher appears 3 times; on page 34, she appears twice; on page 48, she appears once and on pages 50 and 51, the female teacher is depicted 3 times on each page. Mother, the housewife, is shown on page 22 ironing clothes; on page 24, doing marketing and on page 58, she is seen with a shopping basket outside a supermarket.

The Primary Three textbook also reveals a number of sexist pictures and captions. The dentist on page 5, the postman and policeman on page 17, the two policemen on page 34, the two doctors on page 35 and the hawker on page 50, are all males. The teacher who appears twice on page 6, the office attendant also on page 6, the teacher on page 19, the three cleaners on page 23, the shop assistant and the cashier on page 26 and another shop assistant on page 32, are all females. Two pictures show boys in action playing football and volleyball outdoors on page 41 and on the lower section of the same page, are two pictures which depict girls dancing and painting indoors. Within the home, father is shown reading the newspaper while mother is busily sewing away, on page 49. Page 33 depicts two women going to the market while on page 50, three women are shown: one sewing, one ironing and one sweeping the floor.

In depicting the occupations of males and females, for example, in the Primary Four textbook, on page 14, the sailor, the photographer, the waiter, pilot, drummer, actor and artist are males while the typist is a female. On page 60, the shoe repairer, barber, petrol attendant and newsagent are also males. On page 27, while father is setting out for work, mother is cooking the meal. In the Primary Five textbook, in sports, for example, the skier, skin diver, sky diver, fencer and surfer are males; the stargazer is a female!

The third set of NESPE textbooks to be analysed

are the Work Books. Table 7.X(1) shows the distribution of pictures used while Table.7(2) shows the distribution of exercises used in these textbooks:

TABLE 7.X(1)

DISTRIBUTION OF PICTURES USED IN

IN NESPE WORK BOOKS (A) SERIES

Level of Textbooks	No. of Pages	Total No.	M-c No.	F-c No.	M/F -c No.	F-c % of Total	F-c % of M-c Total
Primary One	40	92	49	37	6	40.2	75.5
Primary Two	44	72	33	24	15	33.3	72.7
Primary Three	44	51	31	15	5	29.4	48.4
Primary Four	68	75	40	8	27	10.7	20.0
Primary Five	74	68	37	17	14	25.0	45.9

TABLE 7.X(2)

DISTRIBUTION OF EXERCISES IN

NESPE WORK BOOKS (A) SERIES

Level of Textbooks	No. of Pages	Total No.	M-c No.	F-c No.	F-c % of Total	F-c % of M-c Total
Primary One	40	49	29	20	40.8	69.0
Primary Two	44	51	34	17	33.3	50.0
Primary Three	44	107	62	45	42.1	72.6
Primary Four	68	159	107	52	32.7	48.6
Primary Five	74	298	205	93	31.2	45.4

The pictures used in the Work Books throughout the 5 primary levels show that pictures of males dominate in every level. The lowest percentage of 'Female-centred' pictures apppear in the Primary Four textbook. But this is somewhat counterbalanced by an increase of mixed-sex

pictures which make up 36% of the total for that level. The same pattern is also evident in the exercises given throughout the 5 levels where the ratio of 'Male-centred' to 'Female-centred' exercises is approximately 3:2. The Primary One textbook also has the highest percentage of 'Female-centred' pictures.

The fourth set of NESPE textbooks designed to assist primary pupils in mastering the skills in composition writing is entitled, Composition Practice. The series begins at the Primary Three level and there are at present textbooks only for three levels, that is, Primaries Three, Four and Five. Table 7.Y(1) shows the distribution of topics selected and Table 7.Y(2), the pictures used in the three textbooks.

TABLE 7.Y(1)

DISTRIBUTION OF TOPICS IN NESPE

COMPOSITION PRACTICE

Level of Textbooks	No. of Pages	Total No.	M-c No.	F-c No.	M/F -c Total	N No.	F-c % of Total	F-c % of M-c Total
Primary Three	28	19	7	3	6	3	15.8	42.9
Primary Four	32	21	9	1	5	6	4.8	11.1
Primary Five	35	20	13	0	2	5	0.0	0.0

TABLE 7.Y(2)

DISTRIBUTION OF PICTURES USED IN

NESPE COMPOSITION PRACTICE

Level of Textbooks	No. of Pages	Total No.	M-c No.	F-c No.	M/F -c No.	F-c % of Total	F-c % of M-c Total
Primary Three	28	58	25	7	26	12.1	28.0
Primary Four	32	56	20	3	33	5.4	15.0
Primary Five	35	38	29	0	9	0.0	0.0

In Table 7.Y(1), 'Male-centred' topics dominate all the other categories given as written work to the pupils. It is only in the Primary Three textbook that the 'Female-centred' percentage touches above 15% of the total number of topics given. This seems an obvious oversight on the part of the authors when female percentage in primary schools for the last two decades is almost equal to males as shown in Table 5.F in Chapter 5.

The pictures used for this set of textbooks as shown in Table 7.Y(2) above, concentrate more on both sexes than solely on one gender for the first two levels. However, 'Male-centred' pictures represent 76.3% of the toal number of pictures used in the Primary Five textbook while not a single picture showing a female or females by themselves, is depicted in this book.

In line with the NESPE series discussed above, a survey of four sets of PEP textbooks, that is, Basic Readers, Textbooks, Work Book (A) series and Composition Skills and Practice, is carried out. Only two textbooks,

the Primary One Basic Reader and the Primary One Work Book are (B) series books. Tables 7.Z(1) and 7.Z(2) relate to the Basic Readers. The first table shows the distribution of the pictures used and the second, the distribution of exercises throughout the five primary levels.

TABLE 7.Z(1)

DISTRIBUTION OF PICTURES USED IN

PEP BASIC READERS (A) SERIES

Level of Textbooks	No. of Pages	Total No.	M-c No.	F-c No.	M/F -c No.	F-c % of Total	F-c % of M-c Total
Primary One(B)	72	61	32	9	20	14.8	28.1
Primary Two	96	65	39	11	15	16.9	28.2
Primary Three	86	74	51	8	15	10.8	15.7
Primary Four	47	29	20	0	9	0.0	0.0
Primary Five	54	30	12	2	16	6.7	16.7

TABLE 7.Z(2)

DISTRIBUTION OF EXERCISES IN

PEP BASIC READERS (A) SERIES

Level of Textbooks	No. of Pages	Total No.	M-c No.	F-c No.	F-c % of Total	F-c % of M-c Total
Primary One(B)	72	57	44	13	22.8	29.5
Primary Two	96	151	107	44	29.1	41.1
Primary Three	86	268	244	24	9.0	9.8
Primary Four	47	206	152	54	26.2	35.5
Primary Five	54	235	200	35	14.9	17.5

Table 7.Z(1) shows that in the four levels, that is, Primaries One to Four, 'Male-centred' pictures dominate the other two categories with over 50% in each level.

Meanwhile, pictures showing females in all the five levels are below 17% of the total number of pictures depicted in each level with not a single picture of a female or females by themselves in the Primary Four textbook. Figures and captions that follow a number of pictures depict sex-role stereotyping, for example, the soldier, the postman, the policeman, the fireman, the doctor and the dentist are males while the teacher and the nurse in two pictures used, are females.

As for the exercises given in the textbook, Table 7.Z(2) reveals that 'Female-centred' exercises represent less than 30% of the total number of exercises given throughout the five levels. In the case of the Primary Three textbook, 'Male-centred' exercises are over 90% compared to a mere 9% of 'Female-centred' exercises.

In line with their Basic Readers, pictures and exercises used in the Textbooks, will be investigated to establish whether an imbalance in 'Male-centred' and 'Female-centred' exercises and in the number of pictures used, is prevalent. Table 7.AA(1) shows the distribution of pictures used while Table 7.AA(2) shows the distribution of exercises given throughout the five levels.

TABLE 7.AA(1)

DISTRIBUTION OF PICTURES USED IN

PEP TEXTBOOKS (A) SERIES

Level of Textbooks	No. of Pages	Total No.	M-c No.	F-c No.	M/F -c No.	F-c % of Total	F-c % of M-c Total
Primary One	65	109	54	30	25	27.5	55.6
Primary Two	135	138	81	16	41	11.6	19.8
Primary Three	102	95	53	13	29	13.7	24.5
Primary Four	83	90	31	20	39	22.2	64.5
Primary Five	91	93	41	15	37	16.1	36.6

TABLE 7.AA(2)

DISTRIBUTION OF EXERCISES IN

PEP TEXTBOOKS (A) SERIES

Level of Textbooks	No. of Pages	Total No.	M-c No.	F-c No.	F-c % of Total	F-c % of M-c Total
Primary One	65	58	33	25	43.1	75.8
Primary Two	135	249	193	56	22.5	29.0
Primary Three	102	203	146	57	28.1	39.0
Primary Four	83	414	239	175	42.3	73.2
Primary Five	91	487	346	141	29.0	40.8

Table 7.AA(1) shows an uneven distribution of pictures used as with the Basic Readers with more 'Male-centred' than 'Female-centred' pictures in all the five levels. Except for Primary Four where pictures of both males and females appear together in 39 pictures, in the other 4 textbooks, pictures of males outnumber the other two categories. However, the percentages of 'Female-centred' pictures used in this set has improved over those in the Basic Readers in four levels except in the Primary Two

textbook where a drop of 5.3% is evident, comparatively.

Although more 'Female-centred' pictures are used in this set of books, they are depicted in roles and occupations typical of their gender, as for example, the mother as a housewife either going to the market or doing some household chores like sewing or cooking, or females in such occupations as nurses, typists, cashiers or teachers. Males are seen as tough and the outdoor type - playing football, badminton or swimming. Occasional reference is made to males as teachers. The doctor, the principal, the policeman and the shopkeeper are distinctly males.

In the distribution of exercises in Table 7.AA(2), 'Male-centred' exercises overshadow 'Female-centred' exercises in all the five textbooks. However, a vast improvement is evident in the two levels, that is, Primaries One and Four where the female percentages have increased to over 40% in each case. Compared to the Basic Readers, an overall increase in the percentage of 'Female-centred' exercises is seen in four levels. It is only in the Primary Two textbook that a drop of 6.6% is evident.

Like the NESPE Team, the PEP Team also produced Work Books for the primary pupils. As in the other two types of textbooks, pictures are also widely used to illustrate events and points of grammar. Therefore, both pictures and exercises in these textbooks will be surveyed. The distribution of pictures used is presented in Table 7.AB (1) while the distribution of exercises given is shown in

Table 7.AB(2).

TABLE 7.AB(1)

DISTRIBUTION OF PICTURES USED IN

PEP WORK BOOKS (A) SERIES)

Level of Textbooks	No. of Pages	Total No.	M-c No.	F-c No.	M/F -c No.	F-c % of Total	F-c % of M-c Total
Primary One(B)	96	160	91	43	26	26.9	47.3
Primary Two	98	117	74	35	8	29.9	47.3
Primary Three	73	86	54	19	13	22.1	35.2
Primary Four	91	114	62	36	16	31.6	58.1
Primary Five	100	57	33	10	14	17.5	30.3

TABLE 7.AB(2)

DISTRIBUTION OF EXERCISES IN

PEP WORK BOOKS (A) SERIES

Level of Textbooks	No. of Pages	Total No.	M-c No.	F-c No.	F-c % of Total	F-c % of M-c Total
Primary One(B)	96	96	54	42	43.8	77.8
Primary Two	98	212	148	64	30.2	43.2
Primary Three	73	153	119	34	22.2	28.6
Primary Four	91	237	169	68	28.7	40.2
Primary Five	100	479	286	193	40.3	67.5

Table 7.AB(1) reveals that in this set of textbooks, the authors have put in more pictures of females particularly in the Primaries Two to Five textbooks as in each level, the percentage of pictures depicting females is higher than those used in the Basic Readers and Textbooks. However, in all the five levels, pictures of males outnumber not only those of females but also those which depict both

sexes. In Primaries Two and Three, their percentages are well above 60% of the total number of pictures used.

While 'Male-centred' exercises predominate in the earlier sets of PEP textbooks reviewed, an imbalance of exercises favouring 'Male-centred' to 'Female-centred' exercises, is also evident from Table 7.AB(2). Although 'Female-centred' percentage in this set is higher than the 'Female-centred' percentage in the Basic Readers in all the five levels, the improvement is only in three levels, that is, Primaries One, Two and Five of the set. In fact, the female percentages in Primaries Three and Four are lower than the female percentages in the same levels in the Textbooks set.

As in the other two PEP sets of textbooks, the same trend is prevalent in the authors' depiction of the roles and occupations of males and females. Men are basically workers associated with such professions as the hospital doctor or the office manager or in such occupations as the postman, the bus driver, the policeman and the construction worker while women are portrayed as mothers and housewives and if seen as workers, they are associated with the teaching or nursing professions and in the office, as the secretary seated before a typewriter. While boys are strong and active and participate in outdoor sports, girls are pictured as homeloving and inactive. They are either reading a book or chatting with their friends.

The fourth set by the PEP Team is entitled, Composition Skills and Practice but unlike the NESPE Team whose Composition Practice starts at the Primary Three level, the PEP's composition texts begin at the Primary Four level and stop at the Primary Six level. Each book contains samples of complete compositions, topics for written work and pictures to illustrate some of the topics. For purposes of analysis, the samples and topics given are combined together. The distribution of topics of these composition textbooks come under Table 7.AC(1), while the distribution of pictures come under Table 7.AC(2) below:

TABLE 7.AC(1)

DISTRIBUTION OF TOPICS IN PEP

COMPOSITION SKILLS AND PRACTICE

Level of Textbooks	No. of Pages	Total No.	M-c No.	F-c No.	M/F -c No.	N No.	F-c % of Total	F-c % of M-c Total
Primary Four	31	21	10	5	1	5	23.8	50.0
Primary Five	30	14	10	2	0	2	20.0	16.7
Primary Six	28	49	19	2	1	27	10.0	10.9

TABLE 7.AC(2)

DISTRIBUTION OF PICTURES USED IN

PEP COMPOSITION SKILLS AND PRACTICE

Level of Textbooks	No. of Pages	Total No.	M-c No.	F-c No.	M/F -c. No.	F-c % % of Total	F-c % of M-c Total
Primary Four	31	46	31	6	9	13.0	19.4
Primary Five	30	42	29	3	10	7.1	10.3
Primary Six	28	26	16	1	9	3.8	6.3

Both in their selection of composition topics and pictures, the authors have shown a strong bias towards 'Male-centred' topics and pictures of males over 'Female-centred' topics and use of pictures of females or even of mixed-sex pictures. While 'Female-centred' topics selected for the Primary Four textbooks are over 25% of the total number of topics given, female percentage drops to below 20% in the Primaries Five and Six textbooks as shown in Table 7.AC(1). Not only do pictures of males outnumber those of females and pictures which depict both sexes, in each level, the percentage of male pictures is well over 60%, as revealed in Table 7.AC(2).

To correct such an obvious imbalance of 'Male-centred' and 'Female-centred' exercises and pictures given, as revealed in the above survey, is a considerable task. While this thesis does not aim to argue for a massive programme of positive discrimination in the educational system, it would seem that in the area of textbook provision, some element of positive discrimination is needed in order to provide a balance between the sexes by emphasising 'Female-centred' exercises and pictures at the expense of male ones.

7.8 Conclusion

So far five aspects of educational and school practice have been surveyed and analysed in the areas of sex discrimination and sex-role stereotyping. In the first

case, data from the MOE reveal that both staffs at Ministry headquarters and in schools are made up predominantly of females. While there are fewer males at headquarters, nevertheless they occupy the higher posts, are in the top divisions and are in higher-status jobs as Directors, Personnel Officers, Executive Officers, Specialist Inspectors, System Analysts and Technicians. Females are concentrated in lower-status jobs as clerks, typists and shorthand writers. In the schools, although two-thirds of the teaching staff comprises females, more males are Principals, Vice-Principals and Heads of subject departments. The majority of ancillary staff such as clerks, laboratory assistants and cleaners attached to schools are females too.

While an overt disproportionate distribution of more high-ranking male to female staff is evident in staffing both at headquarters and in schools, covert discriminatory practices are manifested in the hidden curriculum. Within the classroom, both male and female teachers generally display a tendency to favour boy pupils over girl pupils. Male teachers, in particular, have a better rapport with male pupils. Boy pupils participate more fully in lessons and are more forthcoming, nevertheless throughout the three stages, that is, primary to junior college levels, they are also the target of punishment more often by both male and female teachers. This is usually on account of failure to hand in work punctually, and also because their outgoing attitude tends to land them in

trouble with a teacher.

Informal interviews with pupils and analysis of their responses show that girl pupils perceive male teachers as generally cold and distant towards them, while they treat the boys on friendlier terms. Female teachers are seen as generally more dedicated to their jobs though they too tend to be more sympathetic towards the boys in some instances. Both male and female teachers set the trend in sex-role stereotyping by appointing boys as games captain and girls as librarians and enlisting the assistance of boys to run errands and to carry books and other heavy objects, thus emphasising the fragility and femininess of the girls.

Throughout the four stages of education, boys and girls are treated as separate species. In the kindergarten and primary schools, clear-cut seating positions prevail in classrooms while in all schools up to junior college level, they line up separately to and from an activity. Teachers reinforce the concept of segregation by mixing and communicating mainly with members of their own sex. While female teachers generally teach subjects like English, History, Geography, Art and Home Economics, male teachers dominate the Sciences and Mathematics.

In schools, while both boys and girls in the Science stream attempt the same subjects, in the Arts stream girls show a tendency to opt for subjects like History, Geography, Art and Home Economics. Their subject

choices are reflected in both the GCE 'O' and 'A' Level Examinations (See Tables 7.Q and 7.R) in the past decade, in which more boys took the 'hard' Sciences like Physics and Chemistry and technical subjects like Woodwork and Metalwork while more girl candidates sat for subjects like English Literature, History, Geography, Art and Food and Nutrition.

In the fifth aspect covered, that is, the textbooks used in the past and today, sex-role stereotyping prevails not only in the texts used a quarter century ago but even at present. Both the NESPE and PEP series surveyed reveal strong bias in the materials used with more 'Male-centred' than 'Female-centred' topics, passages and exercises given and higher percentages of pictures of males used in all the 36 textbooks analysed (See Appendix 7.F for samples of sexist pictures used in NESPE and PEP textbooks).

Investigations into all the five aspects covered in this chapter reveal the persistent practice of type-casting in employment within the educational system, in school administration, in classroom interaction, in the curriculum and in learning materials. Not only do males dominate in higher-status and better paid jobs both in the administrative and teaching sectors, they also receive more attention in the classroom and in textbooks. It is the tendency of both male and female teachers to undermine the strength, leadership and verbal capabilities of female pupils and to encourage and devote their attention more often to boys, as revealed in the classroom observations,

informal interviews and the responses of pupils in the questionnaire. By allowing all first and second year secondary boy pupils but not girl pupils to pursue Technical Education courses which enhance their future employment prospects, girl pupils are treated as second class citizens. The relegation of female staff and pupils to an inferior status, is further reinforced by the textbooks used in the last quarter century which highlight the activities of males and practically ignore the economic, social, cultural and political contributions of females. Singapore women today make up half the population and over 36% of the workforce but although they are concentrated in partly-skilled jobs in the manufacturing, commerce and service sectors, there is nevertheless, a considerable number of female doctors, lawyers, accountants, lecturers, bank and office managers and principals. Yet, in the textbooks, women are depicted mainly as housewives busily engaged in household chores or, if seen as workers, they are stereotyped as teachers, nurses or secretaries.

The discriminatory practices that pervade society and the family were best reflected in the comments and views of both secondary and junior college boy and girl pupils to Question 4 of the questionnaire. Generally, both sexes were in agreement as to the lack of freedom which girls enjoy outside and within the home and the comparatively small number of females in top-ranking jobs both in the private and public sectors and the wide disparity of salary between males and females in employment.

Further investigations into male and female roles in the home, in society and in educational and employment opportunities available to them, will be carried out in the next chapter. The oral history approach is adopted for the next stage in which structured questions touching upon the perceptions of the interviewees of sex-roles within and without the home, school practice, employment opportunities and female participation in the political field, past, present and future, form the basis of these interviews.

CHAPTER 8

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

8.1 Introduction

It was 2,536 years ago that the great Chinese philosopher Confucius was born. He is acknowledged and revered by millions of Chinese all over the world today. His teachings, set down in writing by his disciples in a work known as the Analects, have formed the basis of traditional Chinese culture and the family system through the ages. In the last years of his life, Confucius edited and compiled a number of books which became known as the Classics: The Book of History, for example, is a collection of documents and speeches of the Western Chou period; The Spring and Autumn Annals gives the history of the state of Lu; The Book of Rites is a description of the ceremonies and rituals associated with everyday life in ancient China while The Book of Changes is a manual of divination which refers to such activities as hunting and fishing, agriculture, husbandry, war, marriage, food, drink and clothing (1). These books, together with the Analects, were not only read but became the set texts for Civil Service examinations in later generations. These early writings have made it possible for the ordinary man and woman today to have a knowledge of the Chinese past; of the way of life; of wars and of beliefs, customs and practices of their ancestors before them. While these early texts did document the lives and activities of men and women of both the upper and lower

classes, the experiences of women were, however, fragmentary accounts which occupied secondary place. Only the achievements of men were highlighted.

In the United Kingdom, on the other hand, until the present century, the focus of much historical writing was essentially political: a documentation of the struggle for power. Thompson (2) claims that little attention was given to the lives of ordinary people or the workings of the economy or religion in times of crisis such as the Reformation, the English Civil War or the French Revolution. Local history, too, was primarily concerned with the administration of the parish rather than the day-to-day life of the community and the street, Thompson (2) further asserts. Historians, East and West who belonged to administering and governing classes, emphasised issues which they thought mattered most. They often ignored the point of view of the labourer or man in the street unless he was a troublemaker. The changing life experiences of women were also neglected by these male historians. Any attempt to produce a different kind of history then would not have been feasible for the relevant documents had been kept or destroyed by people with the same priorities.

Like the tape-recorder, the term 'oral history' is new, but in reality, oral history is as old as history itself. It was the first kind of history. All history in pre-literate societies was oral history. As early as the 5th century B.C. in Greece, Herodotus had evaluated his

evidence by seeking out eye witnesses and cross questioning them (3). In England, in the early 8th century, Bede, in his preface to the History of English Church and People (4), acknowledged his reliance on oral traditions passed on to him by other clergy as well as by countless faithful witnesses who either knew or remembered the facts. Within non-literate societies, such as Anglo-Saxon England, such an approach was crucial as a means of collecting evidence. In the 20th century, different techniques may be used to get in touch with the springs of public opinion amongst the ordinary people. In France, the Annales School of Historians approached history from below by a close exploration of documentary evidence relating to a particular incident or a community. Examples of this approach are Le Roy Ladurie's 'Montaillou' and 'Carnival De Romans'. In the United Kingdom, the Mass Observation Survey was initiated by Tom Harrison, Charles Madge and Humphrey Jennings. Today, the Tom Harrison Mass Observation Archive at the University of Sussex which stores a range of varied and unique material collected in the period 1937-49, represents a rich and colourful source of information previously neglected by historical researchers. Over 500 volunteers were recruited through appeals in the press as unpaid observers whose main task had been to keep a detailed account of their movements and activities from the time they woke up until the time they went to bed on the twelfth day of each month throughout the year (5). Calder and Sheridan (5) quote Charles Madge who was of the view that by adopting a "far more roundabout

way, clues might be found in the popular phenomenon of the coincidence" - in fact, British society, they claim, was so "ultra-repressed" in a Freudian sense, that perhaps "clues" could only be hit upon "in this form" (Calder and Sheridan (5), p.3). Such an approach is time-consuming as evidence has to be built up over a long period of time. Oral history, as a means of collecting evidence through the recollections of individuals may not be as subtle an approach and is also time-consuming but it has the advantage of enabling a considerable bulk of data to be built up which can then be analysed and interpreted by the historian.

8.2 Theoretical implications of oral history as a methodological tool

Oral evidence, as Samuel (6) points out, makes it possible to escape from some of the deficiencies of the documentary record. There exist matters of fact which are,

> recorded in the memories of older people and nowhere else, events of the past which they alone can elucidate for us, vanished sights which they alone can recall (Samuel (6), p.199).

Besides, documents are unable to explain in greater detail what they mean, neither are they able to elaborate with more examples or account for negative instances. Oral evidence, on the other hand, is open-ended and with patience, tact and ingenuity, the historian is able to draw out new and exciting facts, evidence and perceptions all of which contribute to a more unique, in-depth and meaningful

account.

Both oral history and published autobiography have much in common. Oral history, however, offers a much wider scope. Most published autobiographies are from a restricted group of political, social and intellectual leaders and they reflect their personal views and prejudices. Greater flexibility is available to oral historians who may choose precisely whom to interview and what to ask for. A cross section of views and opinions would result. The interview also provides a means of discovering written documents and photographs which would not have otherwise been traced. The most striking feature of all, Thompson (2) stresses, is:

> the transforming impact of oral history upon the family. Without its evidence, the historian can discover very little indeed about either the ordinary family's contacts with neighbours and kin or its internal relationships. The roles of husband and wife, the upbringing of girls and boys, emotional and material conflicts and dependence, sexual behaviour within and without marriage, contraception and abortion - all these are effectively secret areas. The history of childhood as a whole becomes practicable for the first time. And given the dominance of the family through housework, domestic science, and motherhood in the lives of most women, an almost equivalent broadening of scope is brought to the history of women.
>
> (Thompson (2), p.27)

The causes of social change are almost always described principally in terms which reflect male rather than female experience. Oral history, therefore, not only provides the opportunity to delve deeper into a subject but also challenges some of the assumptions and accepted

judgements of historians through the inclusion of new evidence of people, for example, women, previously neglected by historical researchers. The role conflicts that British working class women of the early 20th century, for example, experienced over family commitments and their active participation in the struggle for better female political and trade union representation, were ignored by male historians. These and other aspects, such as the continued prejudice that both male and middle class women supporters of the feminist movements exercise towards these working women and their inadequate understanding of the problems this class of women encountered, are presented by Rowbotham (7) in her oral tradition account. A classic record, for example, of individual working class and lower middle class women talking about their lives - how they see themselves, what they can recall and the significance they place on personal and public events, are compiled in McCrindle and Rowbotham's collection entitled Dutiful Daughters (8). Though the women they interviewed were not typical or representative and the interviews were fragments, nevertheless, they were a stimulus to further investigation.

A change in focus is thus evident with the new lines of inquiry resulting in a change in style and scope of historical writing. The social message changes with the expanded and enriched scope of historical writing. The use of oral evidence breaks through the barriers between the chroniclers and their audience, between the educational institution and the outside, and history becomes simply more

democratic (2).

The crux of oral history, however, lies in the ability of its participants to render accurate accounts of events or issues that occurred many years, sometimes several decades ago. Critics of the oral history approach question the fallibility of memory over a span of time. Baddeley (9) points out that most studies of forgetting have, like Ebbinghau's (10), concerned themselves with highly constrained sets of material such as lists of nonsense syllabus or unrelated words, and studies of retention intervals extending beyond a month, have rarely been attempted. However, a notable study of tests of memory was carried out by Bahrick and his associates (11). They traced 392 American high school graduates and tested the names and faces of their colleagues in classes of 90 or more students over a period of 50 years. Their study showed that the ability to recognise a face or a name from among a set of unfamiliar names and faces, and the capacity for matching up a name and a face remained at a remarkably high level for over thirty years.

The study by Bahrick et al (11) suggests that the memory process depends not upon individual comprehension but also upon interest. Accurate memory, therefore, is much more possible when it encounters a social interest and need. Thompson (2) cites the case of an eighty year old Welshman in 1960 who was asked for the names of the occupiers in 108 agricultural holdings in his parish in the year 1900. 106

of his answers proved correct when checked against the electoral list. Warrington and Sanders (12), for example, selected items that were headline news in Britain for each of a series of years extending from the previous year to more than thirty years before. They then tested their respondents' memory for these events either by recall or recognition. The results showed that substantial forgetting of public events of this type does occur. The study carried out by Bartlett (13) also proved the fallibility of memory to a high degree. A group of ten Cambridge students were asked to repeat to each other in sequence, a Red Indian tale 'The War of the Ghosts'. The final version retained no more than a few scraps of the original. These students had no intrinsic interest in a story from another culture, unlike the American high school graduates and the Welshman whose experiences touched upon subjects of interest and familiarity to them. Neither were the experiences of Warrington and Sanders' (12) respondents related to their social needs or personal interests. The more the subject matter is related to personal, cultural or social interests, therefore, the better one is able to remember the facts and circumstances surrounding the issues. When these elements are present, the reliability of oral history as a methodological tool is no longer questionable.

Nevertheless, as Samuel (6) notes,

> Memory has its selectivity and silences just as the written record has its bureaucratic biases and irrecoverable gaps. It may be strong on general

> outline, but fickle when it comes to facts, reticent on some areas of experience while on others, it is unexpectedly vociferous.
> (Samuel (6), p.205)

But Thompson (2) strongly emphasises that the discovery of distortion or suppression in a life story is not wholly negative as it may provide a salient clue to the family's psychology and social attitudes. Such suppression would be detected quite easily by a good historian and enable him or her to learn something from it.

8.3 Factors that determined the author's choice of oral history as a methodological tool

The advantages of oral history as a methodological tool, as documented above, are many and varied. It offers to the author a new perspective from which to gauge the responses of her interviewees in considering the role and position of Singapore women both in the home and in society and school practice in Singapore in the past and at present. Thus this approach is adopted for this chapter.

Oral history is in its infancy in Singapore. The Oral History Unit of the Archives and Oral History Department was only established in 1979. To date, the unit has carried out four projects namely, the Political Developments of Singapore 1945-1965; the Pioneers of Singapore; the Japanese Occupation of Singapore 1942-1945 and a special project to cover social and cultural history (14). Except for the Pioneers of Singapore project which

was completed in 1983, the other projects are simultaneously still under way. The history of women has yet to be undertaken, therefore, the oral history interviews undertaken by the author, though fragmentary, are an initial attempt to highlight the lives and perceptions of a number of Singapore women, as well as men, and so contribute to a better understanding of the roles and positions of both men and women within Singapore's diverse multi-cultural context. An exploration through the recollections of the cross-cultural and cross-class divisions of the participants, is a means of establishing how the past shapes the present and the present encroaches upon and structures views of the past. Utilising Singapore women's history and oral history, this approach,

> can alert us to the ways that memory can reflect, distort, develop and mediate between the two and so begin to confront the nature of social change.
> (John (15), p.24)

Oral history, as John (15) indicates, does not need to be the search for a 'truer' form of history although by "its more 'humanised' and everyday, personal focus", in the process of recording, it might provide "a valuable corrective to other sources" (John (15), p.20). The correction of myths about the past, as John further asserts, also provides ways of coping with the difficulties of the present or of erasing, for example, undesirable and painful experiences and rejection by other groups. Memory can be turned to positive use by examining the ways in which it operates over time, contrasting individual and collective

memory and investigating doubtful accounts and inconsistencies that are inherent in the narrative - tackling what has been called "the mystery of subjectivity" (History Workshop Journal (16), p.iii).

Bearing in mind the degree of subjectivity that is likely to result from the responses of the author's participants, it should be noted that there is value in subjectivity. There are certain kinds of inquiry which can only be undertaken with the aid of living memory (6). The author's interviewees, for example, talking about their work and their school experiences, know more about these areas than the most diligent researcher is likely to discover and the same is often true of childhood, where people's memories are apt to be particularly precise as Samuel (6) notes. Kerlinger (17) goes further to stress that the personal interview can be very helpful in learning a respondent's own estimate of his own reasons for doing or believing something. A respondent's desires, values and needs may, therefore, influence her attitudes and actions as in the case of Dr. Gandhi, one of the interviewees, who in stressing the greater effort that a woman compared to a man has to put in to get anywhere, indicates her own frustrations in promotional prospects in the early years of her professional career.

8.4 Structure of oral history interviews

There are three sections to the interviews. The

first part of Section 1 focuses on the past, seeking an insight into such areas as the upbringing and childhood of the interviewees; the attitudes that Asian parents generally have towards the education of their daughters; the attitudes of Singapore employers to the employment of female workers as well as the participants' recollections of the active participation if any, of Singapore women in politics and the contributions they had made to society. The second part seeks out their views and opinions on teacher-pupil relationships in schools and institutions of higher learning; on the textbooks used and the curriculum in general.

Part A of Section 2 sought the interviewees' views and opinions on the roles and positions of Singapore women and men today within the family, in society and in employment. For Part B, they were again asked to comment on such areas in school practice as teachers' relationship with the boys and girls they teach, the language both oral and written that teachers use and whether they perceived any changes in the format of textbooks in use at present compared to those in use prior to 1960.

The final section of the interview looks into the future, seeking the views and opinions of the participants as to whether they felt that a totally egalitarian society was possible or desirable by the next decade and how Singapore women would be able to acquire greater academic, legal and political freedom. While equal opportunities in

education are generally available to girls, the curriculum and learning materials at present, for example, as revealed in Chapter 7, are still male-oriented and sex-typed. Thus the views of the interviewees were sought as to whether they felt that a change in the prevailing sexist attitude in school practice in these two areas and in both the verbal and written language used by teachers, should take place in future. If so, how they thought this could be brought about.

8.5 Methodology and problems encountered in carrying out the interviews

The oral history technique can be approached in three ways. There is firstly, the single life story narrative; secondly, a collection of stories which allows the stories to be used much more easily in constructing a broader historical interpretation by grouping them; and, the third form is that of cross-analysis in which the oral evidence is treated as a basis from which to construct an argument (2). A combination of the three forms is applied in the author's oral history approach. For any systematic development of the interpretation of history, argument and cross-analysis are clearly necessary and significant. With this approach, an historical interpretation or account becomes credible when the pattern of evidence is consistent. A single case study, as in the full transcript of one of the interviewees at the end of the chapter, is almost a weaker

base for arguing general historical interpretations than a comparison between two or more groups, each with different characteristics, at the same period, as attempted in Section 8.7. A comparison between different groups over time is stronger still and although admittedly harder to achieve, is also attempted in the same section. The more an argument can be shown to hold under varying conditions, the more convincing the proof.

The commonest methods to apply in recording oral history interviews are note-taking while the interviews are going on; use of the tape-recorder and transcribing the contents later on; or, listening and recalling the salient points and jotting them down afterwards. Two of these methods were applied in the author's interviews. Of the eleven interviewees, ten agreed to the use of the tape-recorder. Its conspicious presence did not affect their behaviour nor arouse suspicion as it tends to do in some people. However, hostility to new technology can be found among very old people, as both Thompson (2) and Samuel (6) point out, and this proved to be the case with the oldest interviewee Mrs. Kuan Yin (aged 73) who insisted on note-taking. To an amateur like the author, listening and jotting down notes at the same time in long-hand, proved quite a trying task since the interviews were semi-structured and each session lasted about two hours.

The physical setting and environment in which interviews are to be conducted, should be pleasant, quiet

and comfortable for a more effective and meaningful session. While the warmth and comfort of the sitting room of an interviewee's home would be the ideal place to carry out such a session, since it helps to put him or her at ease being amidst familiar surroundings, it can also create problems, as in the case of one of the participants. Mrs. Lakshmi's two-bedroomed flat reflects the cultural, economic and social situation of a working class factory telephonist who has to share the flat with her mother-in-law and sister-in-law. The Asian extended family is very much alive here. On the afternoon of the interview, her husband, mother-in-law, sister-in-law and four year old daughter were present. The only place available for a quiet conversation was the kitchen. But here, we were constantly interrupted, first, by the interviewee's daughter who ocasionally sought her attention and later by the teenaged sister-in-law who hung around and occasionally chipped in. This made transcribing more difficult with the constant interruptions and additional unrelated comments from a third party.

The interviews with four of the participants, three of the males and Mrs Kuan Yin, were held in the comfort of the sitting rooms of their spacious two-storey private homes. Interviews with the remaining male and the five females were held in their places of work, in rooms, removed from noise and interrruptions. However, one defect was obvious, that is, the time factor. Since these people were in the midst of their work, these interviews had to be kept short, thus offering fewer opportunities than might be

desired for more probing.

8.6 Profile of interviewees

Altogether, eleven Singaporeans, seven women and four men from the three major ethnic groups were interviewed. The interviews were carried out in September 1984 and June 1985. All but one of the interviews were tape-recorded and a full tanscript of one of the interviews will be given in the appendix to the chapter. Of the seven women, three were Chinese, two Malays and two Indians. Of the four men, two were Chinese, one a Malay and one an Indian. The ages of the seven women ranged from the oldest at 73 to the youngest at 18. The oldest male participant was 59 while the youngest was 19. To protect the identities of all the interviewees, the seven women will be known by such pseudonyms as Mrs. Kuan Yin, Professor Hua Mulan and Miss Tsai Tze (Chinese), Mrs. Khadijah and Mrs. Subandrio (Malays) and Dr. Gandhi and Mrs. Lakshmi (Indians). As for the men, their pseudonyms are Mr. Mencius and Mr. Liu Pang (Chinese), Mr. Parameswara (Malay) and Mr. Nehru (Indian).

In 1979, after the Goh Report was published (See Chapter 3, Section 3.6.2), the Singapore Teachers' Union (STU) decided to carry out its own investigations looking into such aspects as school administration, streaming, attrition rates, language proficiency and second language emphasis for all pupils and the morale of teachers which were highlighted in the Goh Report (18). Besides

distributing questionnaire forms, the STU also invited teachers both members and non-members to participate in semi-structured interviews. Although over 70% of its members responded to its questionnaires, less than 1 per cent of its members were willing to participate in its interviews (19). This clearly reflects the Asian attitude to face to face interviews despite assurances of confidentiality by the team. Realising the difficulty of picking participants at random, the author had to resort to personal relationships and contacts with her interviewees. Mr. Mencius, Mr. Nehru, Mr. Parameswara and Mrs. Subandrio were personal friends and Mrs. Khadijah a former colleague while the rest of the participants were total strangers to the author. However, they were introduced to the author through mutual friends.

The eleven interviewees represented a cross-section of Singapore society, from different socio-economic backgrounds. A number of factors determined the author's choice of the participants. Mrs. Kuan Yin (aged 73) and Mr. Mencius (aged 59) are both retired civil servants. While Mr. Mencius leads a quiet life assisting his wife with the housework and pottering around the garden, Mrs. Kuan Yin, despite her advanced age, is still actively involved in social work. She was selected on the basis of her being the only living female who was a member of parliament in the 1950s. She is currently the president, (a post she has held for a decade), of a woman's organisation which devotes its

attention to promoting women's rights and to charitable work, in particular, raising funds annually to help the old and the needy. Dr. Gandhi (aged 52) is a reputable associate professor of social medicine and public health and a strong advocate of female equality. Mr. Nehru (aged 49) is an honours graduate and a secondary teacher with 23 years of teaching experience behind him. Though his special field is History, he spends his leisure hours writing English textbooks for local use. Another secondary teacher is Mrs. Khadijah (aged 44). She teaches Malay as a second language and has also been in the Education Service for 20 years. Mrs. Khadijah is not only a working mother and educationist but also one who does community work and is in close contact with the common man and woman. Professor Hua Mulan (aged 43) is a lecturer attached to the National University of Singapore. She is currently the foremost female political scientist who, through her writings and speeches has called for greater political participation by the electorate, both men and women included. Though Mr. Parameswara (aged 30) graduated from a technical college in Kuala Lumpur, he is at present an executive officer attached to a foreign embassy in Singapore. These seven participants represent the upper and middle classes while the remaining three females and the youngest male interviewee belong to the working class. Mrs. Subandrio (aged 28) who only completed Secondary Three, is at present, a school clerk attached to a primary school. Mrs. Lakshmi (aged 27) is a telephone operator with one of the multinational companies and like Mrs. Subandrio, she did

not complete her secondary education but left to seek employment at the age of fifteen after failing her Secondary Two semestral examinations. Mr. Liu Pang (aged 19) completed his secondary education and is at present a mechanic trainee undergoing a two-year full-time training at a government-sponsored training institute at Jurong. Miss Tsai Tze (aged 18) works in a factory which manufactures plastic shopping and waste bags, as an accounting assistant.

8.7 Summary of oral history interviews conducted

SECTION I - THE PAST

Part A (Views and opinions on the familial and personal relationships and educational and employment opportunities of Singapore men and women in the last fifty years)

In both traditional Western and Eastern societies, husbands did 'men's work' and wives performed 'women's work'. Men's work was strenuous and dangerous, the tough and difficult tasks in the fields and forests while women's work centred in the home not only because women were incapable of the heaviest outside work but primarily because they were the childbearers (20). Blood and Wolfe (20) clarifies that pregnancy, childbirth and breast feeding made it necessary and convenient for the women to stay close to home. The general process is that childbirth leads to childrearing, to feeding and clothing the children, activities that were and still are homebound.

All the eleven interviewees point to their mothers or female members of their families being the central figures in the overall process of childrearing and nurturing. Typical comments from both male and female respondents were:

> Both my mother and eldest sister looked after me and my brothers and sisters. Father only attended to us at times. (Mr. Mencius)
>
> Although my father did assist in looking after us at times, my mother was the one who cared for the children. She guided, comforted and nursed us. She taught us good manners and etiquette at meal times. (Mrs. Khadijah)
>
> It was my mother who washed, fed and cared for me. (Mr. Liu Pang)
>
> It was my eldest sister and our neighbour's wife who looked after me. When I was sick, they brought me to the doctor. My father hardly spared a moment for us children. (Miss Tsai Tze)

Mrs. Kuan Yin who lost her mother at the age of two, recalled that it was female members of the traditional extended family together with her widower father who were responsible for her upbringing and socialisation. Professor Hua recalled receiving good training in behaviour by her grandmother who filled her childhood days with stories of ancient China.

Whether it was the 1910s when Mrs Kuan Yin was a toddler or the late 1960s when both Mr. Liu Pang and Miss Tsai Tze were born, the role of the mother in childrearing and socialisation among the three major ethnic groups has undergone little change. Fathers half a century ago and today, continue to play secondary roles in these two areas.

Except for Mrs. Kuan Yin whose father a widower, played a more positive role than was usual in her upbringing and socialisation, the above interviewees viewed their fathers mainly as "breadwinners", "the providers of material comforts" and the one responsible for "encouraging their educational growth and development". Professor Hua recalled her father being "stern, a disciplinarian and a distant figure in the background". However, both Dr. Gandhi and Mr. Nehru admitted that their fathers asserted some influence on them throughout their childhood and adolescent days.

Although they came from varying social and economic backgrounds, generally their childhood days were carefree and unrestricted. They could roam about and play games with the other siblings and members of the opposite sex, be they boy or girl cousins or neighbours' children:

> I had a liberal childhood. My parents did not put up sexual barriers. A very close childhood friend was a boy cousin. I often stayed over at his place and we even slept on the same bed,

recalled Professor Hua. While her father was liberal-minded in allowing her to attend school and be educated in English, a privilege commonly denied to girls at her time, Mrs.Kuan Yin recalled his strong objection to her playing hockey in the 1920s. She enjoyed the game but to him, it was "a boy's game, a rough game", in which she might be injured. Meanwhile, Mr. Parameswara claimed,

> My parents are strict and conservative. Although they allowed me to play with my girl cousins and

> girl neighbours when I was young, I was confined to the house after six. Being the only son and brought up in a family of all females, I never experienced segregation.

In the traditional family systems of the three major ethnic groups, segregation of the sexes was an important feature of adult male/female relationship. This practice was continued by the early immigrants to Singapore in the 19th century and has survived for generations. However, from the 1940s onwards, cultural and societal attitudes to this practice began to change as parents began to allow their daughters to attend school and to seek outside gainful employment. A general change in life styles began to take place too. In the traditional family systems extended families housed in one building, was the norm. The limited land space in Singapore was not conducive for the continuation of this practice. From the 1960s onwards, the government's subsidised housing project with its concentration on two and three-bedroomed flats in multi-storey buildings, catered for small family set-ups. In a sociological study of modern Singapore women, Wong (21) points to the establishment of the nuclear family as the norm in present day Singapore and its impact on the traditional and cultural lifestyles of Singaporeans through which women will have to "reorganise their lives around new patterns of husband-wife relationship, new patterns of inter-generational relationship and the rising levels of expectations" (Wong (21), p.136). With the nuclear family becoming the trend today, a gradual decline in the practice

of segregation among the sexes, therefore, has set in. Among the interviewees, however, segregation within the family was generally not in force, but contact with outside members of the opposite sex, was still frowned upon.

Mrs. Khadijah admitted,

> Segregation existed during my time. As a teenager in the 1950s, I could not mix freely with members of the opposite sex. I attended an all girls' school, so did my girl cousins and my aunts before me.

Mrs. Lakshmi added,

> Segregation began when I was about thirteen years old in 1970. My father reminded me then of my homely duties. Mother began to teach me to cook and I was expected to assist daily in the housework.

Mr. Nehru pointed out,

> There was no question of segregation when I was very young. Segregation set in when I was a teenager. I was then forbidden to play or mix freely with girl neighbours.

The other three men and Miss Tsai Tze however, did not experience any restriction of movement or sexual contact with members of the opposite sex outside their family circle. While Professor Hua distinctly recalled being barred from sharing the same bed with her boy cousin after the age of ten, the other Chinese woman interviewee Mrs. Kuan Yin, continued to enjoy freedom of movement and had the advantage of mixing with members of the opposite sex even after puberty. Hers can be considered a rare case in that

her teenage days date back 60 years.

Parents in general, thirty to forty years ago tended to practise discrimination between the sexes when confronted with issues like which child should be given the best education, which child should stop schooling in times of financial difficulties and which child should receive more property. Both Professor Hua and Dr. Gandhi came from homes where no discrimination of the sexes regarding the three issues mentioned, was practised. The other nine interviewees were in agreement that their parents generally favoured the boys. Although her parents treated the girls and boys equally by allowing them equal access to education and accorded them equal share of property, favouritism was expressed in other subtle ways as Professor Hua recalled,

> My brothers got more pocket money and the best parts of the chicken were given to the boys.

According to the teachings of Islam, as Mr. Parameswara, Mrs. Subandrio and Mrs. Khadijah pointed out, an only son would normally inherit half the share of the property while the other half would be distributed among the daughters. The consensus of opinion among the eleven participants was that generally with Chinese, Malay and Indian families, in times of financial difficulties, parents would not hesitate to withdraw their daughters from school in favour of their sons continuing their education.

Of the eleven interviewees, Mr. Nehru and Mr. Parameswara of the four men and Professor Hua, Dr. Gandhi,

Mrs. Kuan Yin and Mrs. Khadijah of the seven women, had attained tertiary qualification. To the question as to what motivated them to pursue tertiary education, Nr. Nehru who first graduated from the Singapore Teachers' Training College with a Certificate in Education in 1956, was inspired to proceed to the university in 1968, twelve years later,

> ..by the large number of 'mugs' around with degrees. I felt I was academically better than most of these degree holders and I decided to prove my worth. Besides within the teaching profession, wide disparity in pay between degree and non-degree holders was evident, while discrimination in treatment between the two categories by principals and headquarters was rife.

Mr. Parameswara had a desire to emulate the successes of past statesmen, through the stories of their great deeds and achievements told to him by his parents and other older members of his family. Likewise, Mrs. Kuan Yin was also inspired by the scholastic achievements of her mother's brother:

> My uncle was a well-known lawyer and I wanted to follow his footsteps. However, I was handicapped by my inability to master Latin, a stipulated requirement in my time. An alternative was teaching, the ideal profession for women.

When Mrs. Khadijah completed her 'O' levels in 1985, she was keen to become a social worker and work with people but her mother discouraged her. Her mother's view to social work was,

> ..it offered no security, no future prospects and is an unpleasant job. Teaching is good for girls.

Being bright pupils who had continuous records of good performance in school, it was quite natural that both Dr. Gandhi and Professor Hua should proceed to tertiary education after secondary school. They were fortunate to have parents who supported and encouraged them in their academic pursuits.

Although both Mr. Lui Pang and Miss Tsai Tze completed their GCE 'O' levels last year, they could not qualify for entry to 'A' level classes in government or government-aided junior colleges. Realising the advantage of learning a skill, Mr. Lui Pang applied for a mechanics training course in a government-sponsored institute. He had the support not only of his parents but his form teacher too:

> When I was accepted for the training course, I talked it over with my teacher. He encouraged me and advised me to give it a try. I had often thought of being better than people like hawkers. If I do well in this course, I will eventually be better off than many who are unskilled.

Miss Tsai Tze who is presently attending 'A' level courses in English, Mathematics and Art in a private college, has ambitions of becoming a proficient graphic designer since Art is her first love. Like her contemporary Mr. Lui Pang, she too realises that further education would serve as an asset to her in future job and salary prospects and particularly it affords an opportunity for self-fulfilment.

Arranged marriage was the trend among the Chinese, Malays and Indians in the traditional family systems in the 19th century right up to the Second World War. When the issues of courtship and marriage were raised with the interviewees, all but one of the married participants admitted having courted or been courted for a period prior to their marriage. Mrs. Lakshmi's marriage was an arranged affair. She admitted that in 1970, when she was twenty:

> My husband learnt of my eligibility and persuaded my aunt to act as a go-between to arrange a formal meeting. A day was set and he came with his parents to our house. We sat opposite each other but no conversation between us took place. When the party left, my parents asked me what I thought of my suitor. "He's okay", I replied. A few days later, formal discussions took place between our two families. Our engagement was announced the following month. My fiance visited me a couple of times. We talked in the sitting room but never went out alone together. Three months later, we were married.

The opportunity to attend school, proceed to higher education and then enter the labour market, in the case of four of the seven women, provided these women the chance to meet members of the opposite sex. Mrs. Khadijah met her late husband while they were teaching in the same school. Dr. Gandhi, though an Indian, was married to a Chinese medical doctor. He courted her while they were students in medical school. A holiday trip at Fraser's Hill in Malaysia brought Mrs Subandrio and her husband together. The rest of the participants first met their future spouses at social gatherings. Romantic love has gradually become the trend among the educated men and women of all the

various ethnic groups in Singapore.

Teaching has been and still is considered primarily a woman's job. Today, two-thirds of the teachers in the Education Service are females (See Table 7.C). The services of trained and qualified female teachers to assist in the nurturing and development of the young, had been acknowledged even half a century ago in Singapore. It was in the early 1930s that Mrs. Kuan Yin first took up teaching. She encountered no problems in being selected for a teaching post. Neither did Mrs. Khadijah face any problems thirty years later when she finally decided to become a teacher. Both she and Mr. Nehru were easily absorbed into the Education Service in the latter half of the 1950s with the growing population and acute shortage of teaching staff.

In 1961, according to Table 5.G, there were only 435 female undergraduates out of a total of 1,763 in the University of Singapore. They represented 24.7% of the total enrolment. Included in the female figure was Professor Hua. Being among the earlier batches of university graduates of self-governing Singapore both she and Dr. Gandhi who graduated in 1957, had no problems in getting employment, owing to the scarcity of talented personnel with tertiary, professional qualifications. In the university which was then replacing expatriate lecturers by native-born staff, discrimination against women in promotions was not practised. As Professor Hua pointed

out,

> Males and females alike who were good and capable were rapidly promoted. In S.E.Asia, talent was scarce, so women who were really outstanding, benefitted generally. I never had to fight for upward mobility.

Dr. Gandhi who was attached to a government organisation for several years before joining the university, was adamant in stressing that very strong discrimination as regards advancement and promotion, existed in her organisation and in employment generally. To quote her,

> Very strong discrimination persists. I make no bones about it. A woman has to work ten times or more than a man to get anywhere. Men just come out with these bland statements, these very repetitive statements about women being the weaker sex, having babies, always sick, always in tears and are highly emotional.

Dr. Gandhi had 27 years of working experience behind her. Mrs. Kuan Yin, a former principal of a primary school who agreed that discrimination did exist where advancement and promotion were concerned, blamed the practice on prevailing social and cultural attitudes rather than on government legislation or company policy. She claimed,

> Women generally make little or no attempt to assert themselves or to accept additional responsibilities that go with a better status job. In the teaching profession, for example, advancement and promotion are open to females but the authorities tend to defer appointment of females especially for posts in secondary schools with male pupils as problems in disciplining the teenaged boys and in establishing good rapport in principal-teacher relationship may occur. Besides, the predominantly male staff in secondary schools do not like the idea of working under female principals. A number of my male

> subordinates, for example, resented serving under me.

Miss Tsai Tze also points out overt discrimination in her firm:

> When I started work in January this year, I was paid $450 salary per month. A month later, a young man with only Secondary One qualification joined the factory. His work involves printing and packing the completed plastic bags. On entry, he was also paid $450 salary per month. At the beginning of June, we both had an increase in pay. His salary is now $500 while I'm only getting $470.

While Mrs. Khadijah, Mrs. Lakshmi, Mr. Mencius and Mr. Liu Pang supported the views of Dr. Gandhi, Mrs. Kuan Yin and Miss Tsai Tze, Mr. Nehru, Mr. Parameswara and Mrs. Subandrio were of the opinion that discrimination was not widely evident. Mr. Parameswara pointed out that in his organisation, members of the staff were judged on their capability and women have enjoyed equal opportunities in advancement and promotions. He agreed with Dr. Gandhi and Mrs. Kuan Yin that male staff members have an edge over female staff members in the public sector. However, both he and Mr. Nehru were firm in asserting that women are generally not egoistic and lack the drive and ambition to aim for top posts. Mr. Nehru was of the view that,

> Large numbers of women themselves do not want to accept higher responsibiliies. Their priority lies in devoting their time and effort to their families and homes.

Mr. Parameswara added,

> To many married women, the home and family means

> more to them. To accept a higher post means having to place home and family second to jobs. However, single women without familial obligations, tend to strive for advancement.

On the issue as to whether there is discrimination in working hours, six women and two men agreed that generally there is no discrimination both in the private and public sectors. However, both Mrs. Kuan Yin and Mr. Nehru pointed out that in the teaching profession, for example, men teachers in fact, put in more hours. Men teachers, they noted, were and still are usually put in charge of games and sports which means staying back after school hours to organise and supervise these activities while women teachers were in the past and are today generally spared these chores especially in mixed schools. Muslims in his organisation, Mr. Parameswara pointed out, are allowed an extra hour off each Friday for prayers at the mosque. On the other hand, his female colleagues annually get a half-day off on the eve of their New Year to attend to last minute preparations while the men stay on to the end of the session.

The eleven interviewees agreed unanimously that there was and still is discrimination in salary in the private sector. In the public sector, disparity in pay was evident prior to 1962. While female civil servants since 1962 have enjoyed equal pay with their male counterparts, the absence of legislation had meant salary differentials for those employed in the private sector (See Chapter 6, Section 6.7.1). Prior to 1934 as Mrs. Kuan Yin recalled, no salary discrimination existed among civil servants.

Single and married women enjoyed the same pay scale, but from 1934 to 1946, female teachers who married were down-graded in the salary scale. To quote her,

> Before my marriage in 1930, a female teacher who was receiving $150 salary per month, automatically lost $50 per month upon marriage. It was thought undesirable by the authorities then that a married female teacher should receive the same pay as a male, since she now has a spouse to support her. Men are generally accepted as the breadwinners in the family.

It was this unfair issue that had goaded Mrs. Kuan Yin to take up politics and to fight for equal pay for teachers in particular and for all government officers in general.

While there is and has always been one salary scale for male and female lecturers in the university, Professor Hua stressed that male lecturers generally receive one or two increments more, at point of entry. Moreover, all female lecturers lose out in fringe benefits.

> A male staff member's medical benefits extend to his spouse and children. A female staff member enjoys this privilege only for herself. If on sabbatical, a male member can get a free ticket for his spouse whereas a female member is not entitled to this benefit for her husband. If a woman is hired abroad, no free ticket is issued to her husband to accompany her,

Professor Hua pointed out.

The question of retrenchment in employment which was raised with the interviewees, again brought unanimous responses from them. They all felt that employers generally tend to favour male workers by retaining their services

while retrenching female workers in times of cut-backs in staff. Dr. Gandhi, for example, had this to say,

> In employment, women are manipulated too much, far too, for example, in retrenchment. Whether they are good or better, women are the first to go. When employers want them, they woo them and give them incentives. I think this is not right. They should take them on their own value. Why can't a woman be employed and be very successful in employment. She's got similar potentials and this I feel is something that has to be reckoned with by men.

Although civil servants and university lecturers do not encounter such an employment hazard, the recession and mass employment of the late 1950s through to the early years of the 1960s, were still fresh in the minds of those middle aged interviewees. Mrs. Subandrio was a victim of such an unfortunate experience in 1976 when the company she worked for, faced financial difficulties:

> I left school to help support my family. After three months of job hunting, I got a job as a production worker. A year later, sales dropped as a result of strong competition and the company began cutting down on its staff. Female workers including myself were the first to go. Married males with families were the last to be retrenched, though a number had shorter lengths of service than some of my female colleagues.

Male participation in politics has been and still is a common feature in Singapore. Comparatively, since the 1950s up to the present day, the female participation rate has been low. With the two older men and the four older women, they could only recall in particular, the active participation of four women namely: Mrs. Elizabeth Choy and

Mrs. Amy Ede in the late 1940s and early 1950s and Mrs. Seow Peck Leng and Madam Chan Choy Siong in the 1950s and 1960s. Mrs. Shirin Fozdar was the first notable feminist who championed for the rights of women but it was Madam Chan Choy Siong who was most successful in organising women's committees that worked for releasing generations of Chinese women in particular and all women in general from the yoke of female servility, unequal pay and an eradication of polygamy (See Chapter 4, Section 4.6). Professor Hua, the political scientist, has this to say about the contribution of the female political figures:

> Women politicians did not contribute much, not even in education which was in the hands of the British Government. Women legislative members like Mrs. Choy and Mrs. Ede - their role was limited to the Municipality, attending to water and electricity rates. While Madam Chan might be instrumental in getting better pay and working conditions for her fellow workers, the climate for improvement was the work of many unionists working in unison.

Besides Mrs. Kuan Yin who had been actively involved in politics for a decade in which a small number of Chinese English-educated women were active supporters of her party, Mrs. Khadijah mentioned a small number of Malay women, including herself, involved in community work which was semi-political in nature. These women were attached to area committees which had, in the last two decades, come out in support of campaigns launched by the government. Mrs. Khadijah's account of her active involvement in such an organisation follows:

> I am a member of the Young Executive Committee of the Kampong Ubi Sub-committee. There are four female compared to eight male members. We have participated in a number of the government's campaigns, for example, 'Use Your Hands Campaign'. We publish a monthly newsletter and organise fund raising projects mainly for educational purposes, for example, the establishment of a library for the children in our community. To assist those school children who are less academically inclined, free tuition classes are conducted for them.

Part B (School practice in Singapore from 1920-1980)

The central theme of part B relates to the educational system prevailing during the span of sixty years which covers the school days of the oldest to the youngest interviewee. To the first question as to the type of school they attended, the older men attended all boys' primary and secondary schools while Mr. Lui Pang went to an all boys' primary school and a mixed secondary school. The three youngest women: Mrs. Subandrio, Mrs. Lakshmi and Miss Tsai Tze attended mixed primary and mixed secondary schools. The rest of the women were educated in all girls' primary and secondary schools. Although centralised control of education and schools did not take place until 1959, all boys' and girls' and mixed schools prior to that date, basically had the same syllabuses in the primary and secondary levels. Except for the emphasis of Science in secondary boys' schools and Domestic Science in secondary girls' schools, all the other subjects in the curriculum were similarly taught in all girls' or boys' schools and in mixed primary schools.

To the question of how teachers generally reacted to boys and girls, Mrs. Subandrio, Mrs. Lakshmi and Miss Tsai Tze were of the opinion that boys were usually the ones who received punishments from teachers for their misbehaviour. Girls were generally "timid, obedient and submissive", therefore, they gave no problems to their teachers. As to the issue of preferential treatment which principals and teachers might accord to boys, only Mr. Mencius of the four men felt that such a practice was carried out. Mrs. Lakshmi, Miss Tsai Tze, Professor Hua and Mrs. Khadijah supported his view. Mrs. Khadijah pointed out, for example, that preferential treatment extended beyond the Malay school to the Malay community:

> In the Malay community in the past and even today, boys and men are served first in official or social gatherings like a wedding. They have the privilege of sitting down to eat first while the women serve them. Only men can pray in the mosques. Women continue to play secondary roles in decision-making in the Malay family.

Seven of the respondents felt strongly that teachers generally tended to project the cultural attitudes of their times by encouraging boys to perform better in their studies. As Mr. Mencius puts it:

> Teachers felt that boys would be able to contribute more to the home and society since they would eventually be heads of families and breadwinners. As for girls, they would eventually end up being wives and mothers, devoting the rest of their lives to childbearing, childrearing and running the household.

While a student in the 1950s, Professor Hua recalled her

teachers humiliating the weaker pupils by telling them to leave school and get married. Fifteen years later, the attitude of teachers to less academically-inclined girl pupils has not changed as Mrs. Lakshmi recounted. But she, Mrs. Subandrio and Miss Tsai Tze agreed that in primary and secondary schools, teachers, both males and females, did appoint girls who displayed capability in leadership roles, to posts of responsibility, as office bearers of clubs and societies. In keeping with Malay tradition and customs, male teachers, as Mr. Parameswara, Mrs. Subandrio and Mrs. Khadijah clarified, not only tended to encourage boy pupils to do better in their studies but also tended to establish better rapport with them. They generally maintain their distance with girl pupils.

Over sixty years ago, Mrs. Kuan Yin was a school girl. She recalled that the textbooks used in both the primary and secondary stages were predominantly sex-stereotyped. 'Male-centred' passages and exercises were the norm. Males were generally pictured as professionals, the workers and the breadwinners while females were seen as housewives and mothers dependent on economic support from their spouses or other male members of their family. Dr. Gandhi also pointed out that sexist tendencies prevailed in the textbooks used in her time, that is, in the 1940s and 1950s:

> Women were teachers, nurses, secretaries and clerks. Women weren't engineers, surgeons or architects. While men were seen as tough, self-reliant and independent, women were seen as

> weak, fragile and incapable of supporting themselves.

The sexist trend in textbooks continued through the next thirty years as all the other 10 interviewees confirmed.

The next issue concerned the use of language, both oral and in written form, that is, examples given on the blackboard and exercises for written work, by teachers. The consensus of opinion was that both male and female teachers tended to use 'Male-centred' language more often, in both oral and written forms.

The responses of the interviewees were next sought as to whether they were taught the achievements of women in the History lessons they had. It was generally expressed by the majority of the participants that the imported History textbooks used in secondary schools up to the 1970s, contained accounts mainly of the reigns and achievements of kings and emperors; the adventures, discoveries and conquests of male explorers and conquerors or the lives and teachings of male prophets and religious teachers like Jesus Christ, Muhammed and Buddha. Only a few heroines like Joan of Arc, Grace Darling, Florence Nightingale and Empress Wu of China, made their way to the History textbooks published abroad or even locally since the late 1970s. As Mrs. Subandrio puts it,

> It seems that women have made no contribution to History. Only the great deeds of men were taught in my school days.

Mr. Mencius added,

> Owing to the occasional historical reference to women, one cannot help but assume that only men have made contributions to society.

Mr. Nehru, the History graduate, however, was of the opinion that History has revealed that world affairs were controlled by men:

> It was men who made significant contribution with their great deeds. The few battles of Joan of Arc, for example, were confined to France while the conquests of Alexander the Great spanned Europe and Asia.

While neither male nor female teachers practised segregation of the sexes in mixed classes when assigning work to them, in P.E. lessons, however, different games were taught to the boys and girls in secondary schools. Boys were coached to play football and rugby, for example, while girls played netball. As recent as 1984, Miss Tsai Tze who left school at the end of that year, recalled that during her P.E. lessons, one male teacher took charge of the boys while either a male or female teacher took charge of the girl pupils. The two groups performed different exercises and were taught different games. Basic training in athletic skills: sprinting, the jumps and throws, were normally available to pupils of both sexes.

Male and female teachers who graduated from the training college did the same courses during their training. Females admitted to the university to pursue the courses of their choice, studied the same syllabuses and carried out

the same projects as their male counterparts. Generally, it was felt that fair and unbiased treatment was meted out to all students regardless of their sex. While Mrs. Khadijah was of the opinion that "lecturers tended to perceive female students as inferior to male students", Professor Hua thought otherwise:

> In the Arts faculty, for example, a long record of female students performing better than male students was evident. Lecturers, therefore, had a high regard for female students,

she clarified.

SECTION 2 - THE PRESENT

Part A (Views and opinions on the roles and positions of men and women in Singapore today)

Sixty-six years ago, at the age of seven, Mrs. Kuan Yin's father registered her in an all girls' English school. Her grandparents, aunts, uncles and friends of the family were generally shocked by the news. The male members in particular, did not welcome the initiative taken by her father to educate a daughter who would eventually be married off to become a property of her future husband's family. The money spent on her education would undoubtedly benefit her future spouse and his family. Her girl cousins were envious of her since they were denied the opportunity of an education. Mrs. Kuan Yin's father had indeed taken a step considered 'revolutionary' in those days when girls were confined to the home, trained in sewing and housework in

preparation for their ultimate goal, that is, marriage. Mrs. Kuan Yin also ranked among the earliest batches of women to seek respectable paid employment outside the home when she took up teaching. However, as the years passed by, more and more parents of the three major ethnic groups, particularly those of the upper and middle classes, began to adopt Mrs. Kuan Yin's father attitude and allowed their daughters to attend school. Parents too began to realise the advantages of an English Education which opened up opportunities for better job prospects both in the private and public sectors.

Today, except for females who have never attended school, those who have a few years of education have generally had at some time or other some outside working experience. Thus the educated married women in Singapore at present, are seen by men and women both as mothers and workers. Their dual roles have contributed to a better status within the family. Husband-wife relationship is on a more equal basis with participatory decision-making by wives. The three married male interviewees admitted that they sought their working wives' views on family matters, while they continue to be acknowledged as heads of their families.

> While the image of men as the main breadwinners and control of the purse remain the prerogative of men, women can have their say and they do influence the family, for example, in matters relating to their children's upbringing and education,

was the comment from Mr. Mencius.

> I treat my wife as an equal partner, not as a subordinate, like men generations before me used to do,

claimed Mr. Nehru.

> Women today are not seen as inferior or submissive as their grandmothers four or five decades ago. However, although women have more say, the final decision on an important issue still lies with men, as in our Malay society,

Mr. Parameswara puts it. Mrs. Khadijah, Mrs. Subandrio and Mrs. Lakshmi admitted to their spouses ruling as heads of their households. Although their views and suggestions on issues relating to the family were sought, it was ultimately their spouses who made the final decisions. However, the other three married women, Dr. Gandhi, Professor Hua and Mrs. Kuan Yin claimed that their spouses treated them as equal partners. Their husbands did not assert their authority as heads of their households. Dr. Gandhi stated,

> Our marriage was a partnership. My husband encouraged me all the time to get involved in women's issues, to strive and fight for better equality for women. He never over-ruled me. We had a very good relationship.

On the issue of childrearing, women today still play the dominant role. It was their wives who bathed, fed, played and nursed the babies, the three men admitted. The general reluctance of Asian men to be involved with childrearing brought about this comment from Mrs. Kuan Yin,

> There is a need for husbands to show greater interest in assisting in the upbringing of children. Fathers are never part of changing babies' napkins.

Mrs. Lakshmi had this to say about her spouse:

> Though my husband willingly assists me in doing the marketing and running errands, he seldom offers to take over looking after our little girl, feeding her or changing her napkins.

As documented in Chapter 4, male superiority and female subservience to their spouses and other male members of the family became the accepted norm among the three major ethnic groups centuries ago. It would be interesting to discover whether this attitude still prevails today. Thus the interviewees were asked whether they, that is, the male participants, dominated the family and whether the female participants, have domineering spouses. Both Mr. Mencius and Mr. Nehru considered their marriage a partnership in which both share in running the household and they admitted to assisting their wives in doing the shopping, washing up the dishes and occasionally, mopping the floor. While Mr. Parameswara admitted to assisting his spouse in some of the household chores, he was firm in asserting that males should dominate the family.

> According to my culture, males have more say. Though my wife gives her suggestions and views, I make the final decision,

he claimed. Mrs. Khadijah confirmed the ideology of their race by adding,

> My late husband dominated the family. He usually made all the decisions. He ran the family with an iron hand. The children used to shiver in his presence and they kept their distance when he was at home. They are closer to me.

Both male and female interviewees agreed on the issue of Singapore females today enjoying a comparatively higher legal status than their grandmothers and mothers before them. Women today can choose their own life partners, decide their own future while the law protects them from maltreatment by their spouses and offers them the opportunity to break off their unhappy associations, choices which were denied females generations before them. The Women's Charter of 1961 was primarily the official document which has been responsible for uplifting the status of Singapore women by granting them equal rights with men in marriage, divorce and management of their personal affairs (See Appendix 5.A). Prior to this legislation, all adult women were given the franchise in 1957 and in 1959 with self-government, equal educational opportunities were also accorded to all Singapore citizens regardless of sex, race, language or creed. With women at present enjoying all the basic rights that men have enjoyed for generations, the views and opinions of the interviewees were next sought as to whether they felt that Singapore women today, are totally equal to Singapore men. The consensus of opinion was that Singapore women still lagged behind Singapore men whether in employment, in the family, in education or in politics. In employment, in the private sector in particular, except for the professions where women are more likely to enjoy parity

in pay with their male counterparts, working class women are still paid less than men. Professor Hua gave the example of graduate women lawyers who,

> ..find it harder to get placements in legal firms. There is still prejudice towards women lawyers.

"Numerically", Mr. Mencius pointed out, "women hold fewer high posts than men". Within the home, women still play secondary roles to men. While most parents today generally allow their daughters to have both primary and secondary education, they would rather expend their resources on sons in tertiary education. The professional woman with tertiary qualification may command respect from her inferiors and subordinates serving under her, but in the eyes of society, she still ranks second to her spouse even though academically he may not be her equal. A Queen's scholar and brilliant solicitor, Mrs. Lee Kuan Yew, the Prime Minister's wife, projects the typical image of the elitist, modern Singapore women who was quoted as saying: "I walk two steps behind my husband like a good Asian wife", when she turned down reporters' request for an interview while on an official visit to the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur, with her husband (Josey (22), p.88).

Part B (Views and opinions on school practice today)

As with Part B of Section 1, Part B of Section 2 focuses on school practice in Singapore at present. The first question sought the interviewees' views and opinions

as to whether they perceive any changes in sexist attitude in the way textbooks are written today. The majority of the participants, however, agreed that some attempts have been made to scale down the degree of sexism in textbooks used today. While sex-role stereotyping is still very much the norm, more pictures, for instance, of women in the role of doctors, and males in the role of teachers, have appeared in textbooks together with more 'Female-centred' passages and exercises. As regards the oral and written language used by teachers, the five younger paticipants, Mr. Parameswara, Mr. Lui Pang, Mrs. Subandrio, Mrs. Lakshmi and Miss Tsai Tze recalled less emphasis, too, on the use of 'Male-centred' language in oral and written forms by both male and female teachers.

Half a century ago, both male and female teachers had the tendency to favour boy pupils by reminding them of their ultimate role in the family, that is, to become the main breadwinners and they were constantly reminded to perform well in their studies so as to be successful in future. Today, a change in the trend among most teachers in this aspect is becoming obvious. While seven of the eleven participants were of the opinion that teachers today tend to mete out equal treatment to both boy and girl pupils and encourage them to aim for academic excellence, four of the participants, three females and a male, felt that generally, teachers still tend to favour boys. They are still concerned over their welfare.

> Although there are more female graduates in the Malay society, more encouragement is still given to males,

admitted Mr. Parameswara.

To the question as to whether boys are still seen as tough, hardy and intelligent while girls are seen as fragile, helpless and slow-witted, five of the women interviewees were of the opinion that such images which were commonly applied to differentiate between the sexes, were a thing of the past. Today's boys they felt, were no longer what their forebears had been: strong, dependable and knowledgeable. The home-bound girls were often pictured as weak, morally and economically dependent on males and mentally inferior to them - "such concepts are widely refuted by psychologists and even the laymen today", they claimed. However, the other six interviewees, the three men and three women were of the opinion that despite the fact that females have emerged in large numbers from their sheltered lives to openly compete for economic survival and be counted, they are still seen as helpless and weak while males are still seen as tough and hardy. The concept of 'intelligence' commonly associated with boys and 'slow-wittedness' with girls, were terms that met with strong disapproval by these six people. To quote Professor Hua,

> Girls are generally fragile and some may be helpless, but slow-witted, definitely No!

Mrs. Kuan Yin had this to say,

> While boys are still seen as tough and hardy, they are certainly not more intelligent than girls.

Dr. Gandhi's comment on the issue was,

> ..many girls have proved themselves to be as good if not better than boys in many schools.

To sum up their views on this issue, is this statement from Mr. Parameswara,

> Today, males are even described as 'sophisticated', a term formerly used to describe females. Males are no longer as hardy as they used to be before - some are even seen as 'feminine'. Besides, boys are no longer referred to as 'intelligent', many in fact, are less intelligent than girls,

he conceded.

SECTION 3 - THE FUTURE

With more and more women joining the ranks of the educated in the last quarter century in particular (See Chapter 5) and seeking gainful employment outside the home (36.3% of women form the workforce in 1984) would it then be possible to envisage a totally egalitarian society by the next decade? Two of the men were adamant in stressing that they did not accept the concept of a totally egalitarian society. Mr.Parameswara firmly believed that:

> ..women should not be seen as equals to men as they will lose their femininity. Preferably, they should not be as rugged and tough as men or be placed on equal footing, otherwise .... there will be chaos.

Mr. Mencius was of the view that,

> ..women should rule the home while in public, men should dominate particularly in areas which require masculine strength, as women are unable to match men in tasks that require physical strength.

Of the seven women, two were convinced that a totally egalitarian society was an impossibility. Professor Hua envisaged:

> ..an egalitarian society for women in which if they so choose a path, there should not necessarily be obstacles in their path other than their own capability, own circumstances and their own choice. I do not agree with the concept of husbands staying at home and wives working. Both parties should pursue their careers but husbands should share in running the household. Above all, the spirit of willingness to share must be there.

Women generally want more freedom was the unanimous opinion of the remaining five women. To achieve a more egalitarian society, Mrs Subandrio felt that:

> Women need to project themselves, to make their views and opinions heard through, for example, women's organisations or through writing and expressing themselves in the local papers. Women should be more actively involved in communal and social work, in trade union movements and in politics.

As documented in Chapter 5, women have made some headway in the academic field through the increase in their number both in schools and in institutions of higher learning. Singapore women of the three major ethnic groups too have since 1961, begun to enjoy legal parity with men and a small number have participated actively in politics while thousands are members of trade unions which

continuously strive for better work conditions for both sexes and parity in pay for women. The economies of Communist societies in Eastern Europe and China, for example, are regulated along the lines of state-owned industries and enterprises, and profits earned are ploughed back into the national treasury with workers taking only the bare minimum in wages. Socialist Singapore, on the other hand, encourages private ventures and enterprises. But explorations into the Singapore labour market in Chapter 6 have revealed that although more than one-third of the labour force comprise women, they continue to experience wide wage disparities and other differentials, for example, fringe benefits between male and female workers. Equal pay for both men and women, therefore, would reflect a more equitable distribution of the colony's wealth in capitalist Singapore. But wage parity alone is not enough to improve the deficiencies in women's status. Equally important are such issues as academic, legal and political freedom. How then can women in Singapore, a capitalist society, acquire greater freedom in these areas?

Both Mr. Parameswara and Mr. Nehru felt that generally Singapore women already enjoy a great degree of academic freedom. All courses in the university at present, they argued, are open to female students and a high percentage of women are represented in every course. While the other interviewees agreed with the accessibility to all courses for female students, they refuted the proportion of

male to female students in such areas as the Sciences, Architecture, Business Administration, Law and Engineering. As Professor Hua pointed out,

> It is only in the Arts and Social Sciences that female students outnumber males. In the Medical Faculty, a quota system is in operation. An approximate ratio of three female to seven male students are selected yearly for medicine. If there is to be greater academic freedom, women should fight for the abolition of the quota system.

Mr. Mencius and the other interviewees felt that potential university female undergraduates should seriously consider opting for 'male' areas such as Engineering, the 'hard' sciences and business courses. Both Mrs. Lakshmi and Subandrio recalled their disadvantaged position in the first two years of secondary school. To quote Mrs. Lakshmi,

> I was not allowed to study Technical Education. Only half the number of us girls who joined Secondary One were selected for the technical course. The other half of us did Home Economics.
>
> I did Home Economics for two years in secondary school while all the boys did Technical Education. If I had done Technical Education, I would be much better off now with a better job and earning a much higher pay,

added Mrs. Subandrio. They felt that it was about time that parents and women in particular, should petition the education authorities for a change in policy if women were to be treated fairly and to achieve greater equality of opportunity.

Many women it was felt generally, were unaware of their rights. This is where the numerous women's

organisations could step in by highlighting the many areas of discrimination evident in the Singapore context through their pamphlets or newsletters. In the legal field, for example,

> Women lawyers should not be content to remain pen pushers but should take up the challenge to play more effective roles as advocates in court,

Professor Hua pointed out.

Female representation in parliament has been comparatively poor in the last twenty-five years since Singapore achieved self-government. Dr. Gandhi, Professor Hua and Mrs. Khadijah, for example, lament the poor representation of women in politics and the absence of an official body to look after women's affairs. If women were to acquire greater political freedom, they should take a more active participation in politics, was the view of all the interviewees. Pressure, they felt, should be placed on the government in power, to appoint some women to head committees which deal with family or women's affairs.

Except for Mr. Nehru who was of the opinion that only half the female population were in favour of greater academic, legal and political freedom, the other half "seemed satisfied with the present situation, being used to it", the others felt that Singapore women generally hanker after greater freedom and parity with men in the academic field, in politics, in employment, in society and in the home. While the educated, professional married women

generally enjoy a shared-role partnership with their spouses, as expressed by the six married women participants in their own family set-ups, working class women continue to be subjected to families in which their spouses treat them as unequals (23). These are the women in particular who "long for more assistance from their spouses and who want to be upgraded from their servile role and position within the home", was the view of the women interviewees.

The final question of the oral history interview concerns sexist attitudes in school practice in the curriculum; in learning materials and in the language, both verbal and written, used in Singapore schools today. As regards the curriculum, it was generally felt that the MOE has been guilty of encouraging discrimination and institutionalising sexist attitudes by confining girls to taking Home Economics and boys to doing Technical Education. If boys were to appreciate the housework put in by their mothers and future wives and play a more participatory role in housekeeping, they should be taught Home Economics. Likwise, if girls were to contribute more effectively to the advanced technology programme launched by the government in 1979, then Technical Education should be made available to all female pupils in secondary schools. Finally, sex-role stereotyping in printed and visual forms in all textbooks should be discouraged. There was consensus of opinion on this issue as there was on the general importance of education in shaping attitudes and influencing the future role of women in Singapore society.

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, EXPLANATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Summary of Findings

Until the present time modern Singapore has been an economically viable republic with a steady economic growth rate averaging 9% annually since 1960 to 1984. From an insignificant fishing village first founded by Sir Stamford Raffles in 1819, she has grown and developed into, firstly, an entreport port and distribution centre for Straits goods in the 19th century and secondly, from the 1970s onwards, into a highly industrialised and financial centre. Over 1.2 million, or 47.7% of its total population were economically active in 1984 and of this number over 410,000, or 36.3%, were females who were gainfully employed. Females enjoy equal educational and employment opportunities before the law and the Women's Charter of 1961 has raised their status on a par with males in many respects (See Chapter 5, Section 5.2). Women are now more in control of their own lives and 19th century restrictions on female participation in politics, in top management in both the private and public sectors, and in most areas of paid employment have been removed in the last three decades. Yet, Singapore women today are far from achieving complete equality with Singapore men.

Since 1959, all Singapore citizens have enjoyed six years of free primary education. While this was an

incentive for parents to send their daughters to school, many did not make use of the privilege with the result that by 1984, 71.5% of the total number of persons who had never attended school were females, compared with 28.5% males (See Table 5.K). In the same year, of the total number of 16,385 under thirty years of age who had never been to school, 11,856 or 72.4% of the total, were females (1). Table 5.K also shows that of the total number who had attained tertiary education in 1984, 65.0% were males while only 35.0% were females. In the local university, although for the first time female students outnumbered male students numerically in the 1983/84 session, that is, 55.2% to 44.8% of the total student population (See Table 5.H), the imbalance in favour of females is due primarily to the fact that boys in the 18-20 age group are in national service. As discussed in Chapter 6, Section 6.3.2, all boys on reaching the age of 18 are bound by legislation to do between two to two-and-a-half years national service. Table 5.H has also revealed that female undergraduates are mainly concentrated in the Arts and Social Sciences whence they tend to end up as teachers and minor executives, jobs to which are attached relatively low salary and status. An educational system which tends to encourage boys rather than girls to take up the 'hard' sciences in secondary schools has contributed to the failure of large numbers of these women to enter the 'hard' sciences, and medicine in particular. The National University of Singapore has, from 1979, imposed a quota of 30% females to 70% males who can be

selected for the course in medicine each year (See Chapter 7, Section 7.6.1). This was in line with a Ministry of Health report which claimed that female doctors were 'choosy' and did not want to work odd hours or to specialise in such areas as Gynaecology or Pediatrics.

In the area of Technical Education further examples of discrimination against girls may be observed. In 1983/94, of the total enrolment in tecnhical colleges 75.3% were male and 24.7% were female and many more male students than female students sat for technical subjects in the GCE 'O' Level Examinations during the last decade (See table 7.Q). Since 1969, when the MOE began to stress the importance of technical subjects to better prepare the country's future workforce for its industrialisation programme, only 50% of secondary girl pupils have been allowed to take up Technical Education. All secondary boy pupils since then have enjoyed the privilege of two years of Technical Education. On the one hand, the PAP Government from 1979 has forged ahead with its ambitious plan to restructure Singapore's economy away from labour-intensive, low-value added and low-wage activities towards technology-intensive and high-value added activities and its leaders plead for more married women to rejoin the labour market (See Chapter 7, Section 7.6.1), on the other hand, the government has decreed that, from the opening school term of 1986, all secondary girls are to be taught Home Management and Childcare instead of Technical Education. One cannot help but question the relevance or reasoning behind this

latest policy in training females to cope with the challenge of advanced technology. Denied the opportunity to acquire the necessary technical skills and technological knowledge which are available to all secondary boys, these girls will undoubtedly be in a disadvantaged position when they enter the labour market. Unable to operate the computers and other advanced technological equipment, they will eventually, like their sisters in previous generations, be confined to low-wage and low-skilled dead-end jobs. The advent of advanced technology will soon eliminate these labour-intensive jobs and probably result in these females being redundant and unemployed in the future.

The school curriculum generally has proved to be disadvantageous to secondary girl pupils in particular in comparison to the opportunities for advancement it offers to boys. Evidence from classroom observations, interviews, questionnaire responses and a survey of textbooks has shown that school practice in general has internalised sex-role stereotyping. From kindergarten right through to junior college level, teachers, both males and females, tend to pay more attention to boys, to establish better rapport with them and to appoint them to posts of responsibility (See Chapter 7). Although girl pupils are not left out of teachers' selections for school offices, they are usually nominated for female-oriented positions such as school or class librarians.

As revealed in Chapter 7, the significant roles of

males as heads of families, sole breadwinners, the professionals, the workers, the hardy and the active sportsmen, are highlighted in pictures used in textbooks. 'Male-centred' passages and exercises also dominated all the 39 textbooks investigated. Not only are foreign authors of these textbooks in the past and local authors at present responsible for the unequal distribution of 'Male to Female-centred' pictures and exercises used, they have also been guilty of misrepresentation of the image and role of females in general. They see women as the weaker sex and as the housewives busily engaged in activities in the kitchen. If seen as workers, then it is in such female-oriented jobs as nurses, school attendants, clerks, teachers and stenographers that women are shown. Although women in the present labour force dominate in the jobs listed above, on account primarily of their lack of educational attainment, some females have penetrated the traditionally male professions like Medicine, Law, Architecture, Accountancy, and Engineering. But the textbooks do not acknowledge this shift and therefore are failing to create a climate whereby more girls might be encouraged to take up those professions. The CDIS, which produces the present textbooks for school use, is a department under the MOE and the directors and authors of the various subject areas are recruited from among teachers in the primary and schools. By sanctioning the use of such obvious examples of sexist representations in all textbooks, it reflects the attitude of the MOE to sexism in education.

Further examples of MOE's institutionalisation of sexism and sex-role stereotyping are revealed in its employment of staff and in its appointment of top executives both at headquarters and in schools. Despite a two-third advantage in the number of female to male teachers in the primary, secondary and junior colleges, in all the three levels of education, male principals outnumber female principals by a ratio of 7:3 (See Table 7.D). At headquarters, the breakdown of the top administrative staff is 58.0% males to 42.0% females (See Table 7.A). In both schools and at headquarters, females dominate in the lower divisions and lower-paid, female-oriented jobs (See Tables 7.B, 7.B(1) and 7.B(2) and Tables 7.G, 7.G(1) and 7.G(2).

Sex-role stereotyping and discriminatory practices extend beyond the classroom and the educational system to the wider world of work. Throughout the 19th century, women experienced a labour market which restricted their entry into male-oriented occupations. At the turn of the century when some organisations began accepting women as part of their workforce, they were mainly employed in female-oriented jobs like teaching, nursing and clerking. The doors of tertiary institutions like the university were shut to them for years. Later when women were allowed to enrol for courses in tertiary institutions and gained higher academic qualifications, upward mobility was still slow and far between both in the private and public sectors. Employers, usually males, had their reservations about women's capability to lead, to organise, to make decisions

on their own and to tackle any crisis that might arise. Having worked for almost thirty years under several male employers and a prominent medical figure in her field today, Dr. Gandhi, one of the author's oral history interviewees, arrived at this conclusion about her male superiors. She says:

> Employers still hang on to these old ideas that women are not capable of forming their own opinions. A woman's opinion is not much to be listened to unless of course by some chance or some way, she's got to the top and echoes somebody's views, usually a male's, then she becomes acceptable. If she gives her own views, she's not.

Her views were generally endorsed by the majority of the other 10 interviewees. Studies by Quah (2) and Wong (3), for example, have shown that cultural and societal attitudes towards the sexes, then and now, are that women are the weaker sex and should continue to be ruled and not to rule.

Since the 1950s there have, however, been clear statements of policy affecting the status of women within the three major ethnic groups. In line with the general world trend, the Singapore government granted its women their franchise in 1957 and the climax of the government's move to raise the status of women was expressed in its passing of the Women's Charter of 1961. The abolition of polygamy and the establishment of monogamous marriages not only helped to stabilise marriages in general but also protected wives from indifferent or harsh treatment by their spouses. A direct outcome of the Charter was the

introduction of equal pay for women by the PAP Government in 1962. But equal pay benefitted only the women civil servants in the public sector. The absence of legislation in the last two decades has resulted in wide wage disparities between males and females in the private sector. Even within the same occupations among blue and white collar workers, women were paid less. Women workers in general also encountered discrimination in medical and other fringe benefits besides being passed over in companies' selections for courses to upgrade their skills, as revealed in Chapter 6, Section 6.7.2. The cumulative result of the unequal access to training and the often unfavourable selection and advancement procedures in both the private and public sectors allied with their exclusion from Technical Education in school, is that women are confined to inferior jobs in the labour market.

Evidence of the slow pace of change in cultural and societal attitudes towards women's place in Singapore society may be found in the sphere of public life. Women are represented only marginally in politics, in high government offices, in the judiciary and in institutionalised religion. Despite the election of a number of women members of parliament in the 1959 to 1968 general elections and three women in the December 1984 general election, no woman member of parliament has held a ministerial post. No woman high court judge has ever been appointed nor do women feature prominently in the top

hierarchy of the various religious organisations today.

In the private sphere attitudes towards women's role and status are also slow to change. Sex-role stereotyping, discrimination and inequality are indeed most obvious within the family, be they Chinese, Malays or Indians. Parents of each of the three major ethnic groups may be influenced by the prevailing trend in industrialised countries to educate their daughters but given the limited resources to expend on tertiary education for their children, sons are usually their first choice as candidates for higher education. This was the opinion of nine of the eleven interviewees of the author's oral history interviewees (See Chapter 8, Section 8.7). Secondary and junior college girl pupils who participated in the questionnaire distributed at the end of the author's classroom observations commented on the unfair treatment by mothers who demand their assistance, and not their brothers', in housework and by fathers who generally give their brothers more pocket money and more freedom (See Chapter 7, Section 7.5.3). Among the wealthy, sons inherit the bulk of their parents' property. The interviewees in Chapter 8 also pointed out that between married couples even today, husbands continue to be seen as heads of families and as decision-makers. Practically all the housework and the task of childrearing fall into the hands of mothers. Only among the younger group of English-educated families do we find some evidence of shared-roles within the family. As shown in Table 6.N, the participation of women in the labour

market fluctuates with age more than in other countries in the East and West. This pattern may be ascribed to the unwillingness of Asian men to participate equally in home management and child-minding. It is not without considerable regret as Ong (4) has pointed in Chapter 6, Section 6.6, that many well qualified professional women are forced to withdraw from full-time employment, leaving behind the knowledge and skills acquired in higher education, to devote a large portion of their lives to childbearing and childrearing. There are no figures available for the re-entry of married women into the labour market but from the evidence of speeches made by the Minister of State for Trade and Industry and by the past President of Singapore urging married women to return to work (See Chapter 7, Section 7.6.1), one can assume that there are a considerable number of married women not returning to paid work. Having left their jobs to marry and raise children, such women may well be reluctant to return to the labour market because of the tremendous personal pressure brought about by a full-time job and full-time household duties which are not shared by their spouses to any significant degree.

An overt contributory factor which is detrimental to the whole image of women in that it associates her with the home as her due destiny, is the mass media. In Singapore, as in the United Kingdom and the United States, the mass media have been responsible for the gross misrepresentation of women who are generally depicted as

subservient beings with sex-defined roles, with no other interests except their involvement with household chores and wholly dependent on their spouses for financial support (See Chapter 5, Section 5.6). The influence of the mass media in Singapore has only been referred to incidentally in this study: it is an area worthy of further investigation.

9.2 Explanations of the situations of women in the Singapore labour market

For one-and-a-half centuries after the founding of modern Singapore the vast majority of single and married women were practically dependent on male members of their families for financial support with the exception of about 10% (in the 1950s) of females of the population. Undoubtedly, as Yang (5) and Whyte (6) assert, economic dependence on males in traditional society meant inferior status and the institutionalisation of women to the home and to childbearing and childcare. But when women began to emerge from their cloistered lives to answer the nation's call to boost its industrialisation programme from the 1970s onwards, they found their way forward blocked by many obstacles. Unequal pay, access discrimination which Wong (3) refers to as discrimination in educational and training opportunities, discriminatory recruitment and limited range of jobs open to women together with unfavourable terms of contract and tenure, were some of the problems with which women workers had to contend.

It is undeniable that many employers think that the disadvantaged situation of women workers in the labour market has been brought about partly by women themselves and to some extent, this might appear to be true. Many married women do give priority to their homes and to their children, to the exclusion of paid work outside the home. As four of the author's interviewees have argued, (See Chapter 8, Section 8.7), women themselves seem to lack assertiveness and the ambition to strive for advancement. It could be claimed that they would rather forego advancement and promotion than face the challenge of new, additional responsibilities which might mean spending more hours away from their home and children. However, as shown in the previous discussion of dual labour markets, this is too simple an explanation. There is a dialectical relationship between women's expectations of the labour market on the one hand, and their emotional and psychological dispositions and attitudes to domestic responsibilities on the other. Husbands, too, are to be blamed for contributing to their wives unequal conditions of employment by their indifference to role-sharing in the areas of housework and childrearing and by their encouragement of, or collusion with, their spouses' withdrawal from the labour market.

While the perceived interests of male and female workers do contribute to the imbalance in the sex ratio in the labour market and the disparities in wages and other 'perks' for women employees generally, the more fundamental issues relate to such factors as employers' attitudes to the

employment of females; the attitudes of trade unions in regulating the supply and demand of workers; the existence of a segmented labour market and the role of the government in enhancing or otherwise institutionalising the unequal conditions of employment of female workers, all of which may contribute to the reluctance, cited earlier, by women to strike out in new directions.

As documented in Chapter 1 and Chapter 6, Section 6.2, a crucial factor which determines the position of women in the Singapore labour market, is the presence of a dual labour market with its two-tier divisions. The bulk of Singapore's female workforce falls into the secondary or lower tier. Multinationals were, and still are, able to maintain low wages for some local male and many more local female workers because of Singapore's status as a developing country and because of the lack of marketable skills common to local workers. In the period 1957 to 1984, while the figures for female participation in all industries have increased substantially from 84,210 or 17.8% in 1957, to 426,793 or 36.3% of the total number of employed persons in the labour market in 1984, there still exist big differences between the sexes in the types of occupations they hold and the salaries they command (See Tables 6.C and 6.AB). Vertical and horizontal occupational segregation continue to prevail. Hakim's (7) definition of the these terms are as follows:

> Horizontal occupational segregation exists when men and women are most commonly working in different types of occupation. Vertical occupational segregation exists when men are most commonly working in higher grade occupations and women are most commonly working in lower grade occupations, or vice versa.
>
> (Hakim (7), p.19)

While Barron and Norris (8), Blaxall and Reagan (9) and Rendel (10), for example, have pointed out the extent of both vertical and horizontal occupational segregation in the United Kingdom, Wong (3) and Salaff (11) have highlighted these factors in the Singapore context in their studies.

In connection with horizontal segregation, Singapore female workers are very over-represented in textile and garment industries at 74.8% and 87.1% of the total labour force in these industries, respectively (See Table 6.G). The new electronic industry has quickly shown itself to be another occupation in which employees are predominantly women. In 1984, women workers make up 69.5% of the total labour force in this industry (See Table 6.D(2).

In connection with horizontal segregation for non-manual workers, women are highly over-represented as receptionists, other office staff, librarians, teachers and the other caring professions (See Appendix 6.C, Table 2). Conversely men are highly represented for example, as judges, managers, surveyors, engineers (civil, electrical/ electronics, mechanical, chemical) and architects and town planners (See Appendix 6.C, Table 1).

The idea of vertical segregation is applicable both to the labour market as a whole and to the pattern within broad occupational categories. In general, Singaporean women are more often to be found in low status and low paid jobs. For example, in 1984, 67.2% of clerical and related workers are women whereas they still form only 17.4% of the total number of administrative and managerial workers (See Table 6.C) despite a considerable growth since 1957. Further evidence of segregation is revealed in the incomes of males and females, for example, in the year 1984. In that year, Table 6.AB shows that 14,388 males or 85.6% to 2.429 females or 14.4% of the total number in the category of professional, technical and related workers earned $3,000 and over per month. An even wider disparity is evident in the category of administrative, managerial and executive workers in 1984: 22,024 males or 91.4% to 2,079 or 8.6% females of the total number earned $3,000 and over per month. It is in the category of service workers that the widest disparity is revealed between females and males whose monthly income were under $200: 9,221 or 76.3% females to 2,861 or 23.7% males of the total number in 1984.

Verticial segregation within broad occupational categories is revealed for example, in Tables 6.D(2) and 6.D(4). In manual occupations, women are seldom production supervisors or foremen. Among clerical and related workers, women are seldom executive officers or supervisors but fairly frequently clerks and overwhelming stenographers. Vertical segregation is very obvious in the teaching

profession. Appendix 6.C, Table 1 shows that men are more likely than women to be university lecturers while women are more likely to work in junior colleges (See Table 7.D). At the lower levels of education women predominate overall but more so in primary than in secondary schools (See Table 7.C). Even though there are more female than male teachers, men are more often in almost all types of school more likely to be principals (74.1% males to 25.9% females of the total number); the single exception is in Government-aided full schools (See Table 7.D).

The disadvantaged situation of Singapore women particularly, is due to their generally poor educational attainment as revealed in Table 5.K and the employers' preference in their selection of males over females for company-sponsored full-time training courses, as shown in the figures in Appendix 6.A. Employers both in the private and public sectors tend to provide the resources for upgrading the skills of male employees in the belief that they will ultimately get better returns from them in the form of continued service in their employment compared to the intermittent participation by women. As pointed out by Siltanen (12) in Chapter 6, Section 6.2, the secondary sector acts as a buffer for the primary sector. In times of low product demand, a reduction in numbers in the secondary sector poses to a multinational firm little problem of adjustment and the same applies to an increase in numbers when product demand improves. Thus women provide a reserve

army of labour to be taken on or laid off according to changes in the trade cycle.

For decades in the United Kingdom, as Chiplin and Sloane (13) suggest, the pressure of male trade unions has been instrumental in crowding women into comparatively few occupations. By jealously guarding their occupations, male workers continue to maintain control over wages in their specialised fields while the prohibition of females result in a depression of their wages. A similar trend has also persisted in the Singapore labour market for many years. Though female membership in trade unions has increased by leaps and bounds in the last two decades, active female participation in leadership roles is only 18.2% as executive committee members and 29.7% as branch officials among the six largest unions affiliated to the NTUC in Singapore in 1983 as revealed in Table 5.C. With males controlling all the unions, it is not unusual to find the interests of female workers low in their priorities, when negotiations for better work conditions for members take place between employers and unions.

Finally, a most likely source of the wage differentials and other discriminatory practices that exist between the sexes, is the attitude of the government towards female employment and education. As Chiplin and Sloane (13) point out, the government can adversely influence the human capital formation of females by its discrimination in the provision of education and also by its neglect in

protecting the employment of females by not passing official anti-discrimination legislation. In the Singapore context, the government has been faced with the conflicting need to attract women into the labour market to counteract the effects of male national service (See Chapter 6) and the influx of foreign workers (See Chapter 7, Section 7.6.1), yet, at the same time, to maintain the attraction of low wages to multinationals. This thesis has sought to show that it is women who are at the lower end of the wage structure. Discrimination in education has continued and can be observed in the unequal numbers of secondary pupils who can be taught Technical Education, in the funds to be expended by the government statutory board, the EDB, to upgrade the skills of workers to meet the challenge of the technological age, as discussed in Chapter 6, Section 6.3.3 and in the absence of anti-discrimination legislation. The absence of an Equal Pay Act and a Sex Discrimination Act together with the lack of a statutory minimum wage has provided multinationals the loophole to institutionalise low wages for all workers, skilled and unskilled. The government is also now guilty of the sin of commission as well as omission. This is evident in its latest educational policies which, in turn, are likely to set up a new conflict of policy priorities. This is discussed in the next section.

9.3. Recommendations for changes to improve the role and status of Singapore women

9.3.1 In education

Two of the factors that contribute to the disadvantaged position that women experience in the labour market are firstly, their low educational attainment and secondly, the inadequate preparation accorded them to meet the challenge of the technological era that Singapore has entered upon. If the future female members of the workforce are to benefit from the fruits of their labour, the highest priority is a change in educational policies. Firstly, the MOE's latest policy, to be implemented in January 1986, which introduces compulsory Home Management and Childcare courses for secondary girls only, should either be scrapped or extended to all secondary boys. This policy is not only sexist but also regressive in a society which only two decades ago had endorsed the rights of women to equal treatment both in marriage and in society. Secondly, the MOE needs to revise its 16 year old Technical Education programme. Since 1969, all Secondary One and Two boy pupils have enjoyed the privilege of having two years of Technical Education while only 50% of their female classmates are allowed to be taught technical courses. This has been the most obvious overt discrimination that successive generations of secondary girls have experienced. Unless all secondary girl pupils are given the opportunity to master computer and other technical skills, they will never be able

to step in and take over the highly-skilled jobs in the next few years when the republic runs short of suitably qualified foreign technical and technological personnel. At present, Singapore depends heavily on foreign expertise to manage many of its industries. If all secondary girl pupils were given the same technical and other relevant training as secondary boys, then this reliance on foreign workers might no longer pose a problem to the government and local industrialists, as acknowledged openly by them in their call to married women to re-enter the labour market (See Chapter 7, Section 7.6.1).

Legislation in Western countries in particular, has reduced to some degree, sex-role stereotyping and discriminatory practices in education. The author strongly advocates a Sex Discrimination Act for Singapore like the one in operation in the United Kingdom (See Appendix 9.A), which would help regulate the entire educational system. However, as pointed out in Chapter 7, Section 7.1 the apparent powers of the EOC's recommendations about how to promote equality arising from investigations into discriminatory practices in education are not binding in law. Therefore, a Singapore version of a Sex Discrimination Act would need to strengthen the position of an EOC to be appointed to oversee and monitor education in Singapore at the outset. A Sex Discrimination Act for Singapore should also incorporate clauses relating to equal treatment for women as laid down by America's Title IX of Education

Amendments 1972 and Women's Educational Equity Act 1976 and the recommendations of the Indian Commission 1964-66 as discussed in Chapter 7, Section 7.1.

Within the educational system, as investigations in Chapter 7 have shown, both overt and covert discriminatory practices and sex-role stereotyping persist and need to be eliminated. There should firstly be a change of attitude among MOE policy-makers towards girl pupils who should not be treated as second class citizens, but as equal members of society. Tawney's (14) idea that a society as a whole flourishes when all its members are afforded equal treatment, as befitting their dignity as human beings, is particularly relevant here. While in the United Kingdom legislation affecting the curriculum and day to day running of schools is opposed by many who have lived for years under a partially decentralised system which affords considerable autonomy to Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and indeed to individual schools, in Singapore there is no such tradition. Centralised control is accepted and no alternative is sought. Thus fairly specific legislative measures to do with curriculum choices and provision of materials would, in the author's opinion, be acceptable. Such legislation could ensure that girls are not confined to learning only minimally marketable skills such as Home Management and Childcare. Legislation, it is hoped, would result in a curriculum that would accord equal access to technical training for both boys and girls to better prepare them for more lucrative prospects in the labour market in future as

well as to help them to live full lives in a technological society. Monitoring of school practice by a body like the EOC in Britain would, it is hoped, also help to break down the practice of segregation of the sexes when they queue up for morning assembly, in seating arrangements in class and generally, in teachers' interaction with their pupils during lessons and outside the classroom. A Sex Discrimination Act for Singapore could, for example, discourage authors of textbooks from publishing pictures, exercises and passages which are sexist in nature. In order to achieve a more balanced representation of male and female-centred topics, images and exercises, it might indeed be necessary to tip the balance in favour of girls who, as has been shown in Chapter 7, have suffered for many years from a negative image in educational materials. Finally within the university, legislation could be directed towards eradicating the practice of the quota system for undergraduates who opt to take up medicine.

Even though Piper (15) makes the point that women may not profit from such changes because, among other things, of the low self esteem in which they hold themselves, he also acknowledges that the factors influencing an individual's experience of education, be it favourable or unfavourable, are legion. It is likely, therefore, that a concentrated assault on as many sources of unequal treatment as possible may enhance that experience for women and contribute to their greater sense of

achievement and of self esteem.

9.3.2 In employment

Five years have gone by since the government's attempt to restructure the economy towards high value-added and advanced technological activities began but initial courses geared to upgrade the workers' skills and funds expended by the EDB towards this objective appear to benefit male rather than female workers (See Chapter 6, Section 6.3.3). The emphasis in these courses is on higher skills development where more males than females are likely to qualify since their academic attainments are generally higher than females as revealed in Table 5.K. If the funds were aimed at basic training, then more females would benefit.

Becker's (16) pioneering analysis assumes that employers are prepared to obviate the necessity of employing female labour, that is, they generally have a positive 'taste' for discrimination. Thus should they employ women, then the latter must be prepared to accept a sufficiently low wage. This attitude of employers should not be encouraged and the government, as the most influential employer, should take the lead to alter such a 'taste'. Women workers today, and for decades previously, represent a necessary complement to male workers in the Singapore labour market. Bearing in mind the figure of 36.3% female workers who make up the total labour force, the success of Singapore's economic performance must be seen to have been

the outcome of contributions made by both male and female members of the labour force. In view of the advanced technological needs of Singapore society and its current dependence on foreign expertise, the demands for equality for women is not simply a moral exhortation but also a rational policy objective.

With the EDB spearheading the re-training and upgrading of skills of the present workforce, labour costs for employers are likely to be reduced. Employers could then initiate more on-the-job training for both male and female workers who have not been selected for courses under the auspices of the EDB. Married women, in particular, would welcome such training if it were within the normal working hours, since their housework schedule would not then be upset. Where they have to attend courses outside their organisations, compassionate leave to do so should be freely available to them. Since it is women who bear responsibility for the old, the sick and the disabled, as well as for children, some form of provision for these categories is required if women are to make the most of training opportunities. Thus those married women who wished to extend their horizons beyond the home, and the numbers of such women are increasing, markedly in the younger age group, would be able to fulfil their desire for self-development. Their newly acquired knowledge and skills would, undoubtedly, be an asset to their firms and help contribute towards solving the shortage of highly-skilled

local labour. With the additional higher skills acquired, both single and married women would be able to compete more effectively with their male colleagues for advancement and promotion and so bridge the wide gap in executive positions and thus contribute to the gradual elimination of horizontal and vertical occupational segregations that persist in the Singapore labour market. Upward mobility at work would no longer be a privilege and an expected progression reserved solely for male workers.

The overt stereotyping of sex roles in the Singapore labour market and the discriminatory practices prevailing both in the private and public sectors in areas of pay, training, promotions, medical and other fringe benefits all point to the fact that there have not been sufficient efforts made by the government to establish a more equitable working environment. Lack of fringe benefits for married women, as pointed out in Chapter 6, Section 6.7.2, constitutes women as dependents of men. This unfair treatment should be discouraged and an Equal Pay Act should see to the elimination of this practice. In the early years of industrialisation, cheap labour fulfilled the need of the economy which was basically to lure multinationals to invest in the republic. This has proved to be an unwise move, detrimental in particular to female workers. Although from 1972, a National Wages Council was set up to regulate pay, its yearly recommendations generally favoured white rather than blue collar workers. There appears the need for the maintenance of minimum wage protection in particular for the

latter category of workers to reduce the extent of low pay amongst the women affected as well as to raise women's earnings as a whole relative to men's. Without an Equal Pay Act which would regulate equality in all areas of employment and pay similar to those in operation in many parts of the Western world, blue collar and women industrial workers in particular, will continue to receive low pay and be subject to unequal conditions of employment. An Equal Pay Act in principle should ensure that all women in all occupations both in the private and public sectors would receive equal pay for work of equal value, as outlined in the ILO Convention 100 of 1951. The ILO's recommendation on the issue states that equal pay:

> ..should be approached by concerting constitutional and legislative action with steps to require explicit inclusion of equal pay provisions in collective agreements, technical improvements in the evaluation of job content and comparability, and a broad campaign of education and promotional activity to help to force the pace.
> (Cited by DE (17), p.7)

It must, however, be acknowledged that in the United Kingdom the Equal Pay Act has in practice been dogged by problems of interpretation, as pointed out by Rendel (18) who cites for example, a number of equal pay cases that have been lost because there have been no men engaged in the same or broadly similar work, where the verdicts of tribunals were far from satisfactory and where judgements of tribunal chairmen reflected their prejudices and assumptions. Since 1984, the British Equal Pay Act, as a result of a ruling in

the European Court of Justice, now embodies the right of equal pay for work, which may be different, but which can be shown to be of equal value. It is likely in Singapore, should an Equal Pay Act be implemented, that similar problems of definition and interpretation of what is broadly similar work might occur and biased attitudes of tribunal chairmen might emerge. It is, therefore, important that the question of what constitutes broadly similar work should be clearly defined at the outset. But, more significantly, the British arraignment at the European Court of Justice indicates that the principle of equal pay for work of equal value must also be incorporated into a Singapore equal pay law; such a provision is necessary if women, in what is still a segregated labour market, are to enjoy the reality of a right to equal pay.

Besides action on equal pay, the government should also devote more attention to ensuring that all women have equal opportunities in employment: that those women who need or wish to work should have access to the work of their choosing on equal terms with men and should receive the same treatment in employment as men (17). With legislation, it would not only help remove the more obvious obstacles to women but would also contribute towards a change in cultural and societal attitudes towards women in work and act as a deterrent against discriminatory practices in all organisations. Law can indeed help to change employment practice and attitudes as revealed in the legislative proceedings in the United Kingdom (19).

An Equal Pay Act for Singapore should also incorporate terms relating to the extension of equal medical treatment to the members of the families of both male and female employees both in the private and public sectors. Medical benefits for married women should extend to their spouses and children while in the case of single males and females, to both their parents respectively. The latter case takes into consideration the increasing number of educated males and females who tend to marry in their late twenties after several years of employment, and single females in particular, an increasing number of whom tend to remain unmarried throughout their working career. Table 6.M, for example, has shown that in the period 1974 to 1984, the number of single women in the labour force from the age of twenty to fifty-four has increased substantially, thus revealing a new trend among single women today who not only marry later but also may remain unmarried throughout their careers. Such a trend represents a shift in cultural attitudes and extends to the male sex also, for as Table 6.M reveals, more men as well as more women are remaining single throughout their working lives.

Another important issue concerns the degree of maternity protection for married women in general. As early as 1972, the EEC report on the Employment of Women, viewed maternity as a social function not as an occupational disadvantage (20). Five aspects of maternity protection therefore, should be considered when drawing up such a legislation. The first aspect should relate to leave before

and after the birth, the extent to which such leave is guaranteed and paid and who pays for the leave; the second, protection against dismissal during pregnancy and the right to resume employment after the birth; the third aspect should consider nursing breaks provision; the fourth should consider the right of the new mother to extended leave beyond the statutory minimum period without the loss of employment rights and, the fifth aspect should consider the provision for lighter workload and other measures to safeguard the health and safety of women during the period of their pregnancy and after the birth of their new baby (20). To ensure that such protection is not lightly taken by all employers, penalties should be laid down for violations, for example, for the dismissal of female workers during pregnancy and during the period of their confinement. The original six European Economic Community (EEC) countries guaranteed fourteen weeks of maternity leave normally taken as six weeks before and eight weeks after birth (17).

The Singapore Employment Act of 1968 does lay down provisions for the protection of expectant mothers from dismissal which include the payment of full salary during the period of confinement and the granting of two months of maternity leave. But in line with the government's family planning programme, married women in the public sector since 1970 have suffered a number of 'population disincentives'. For those having their third or subsequent child, they not

only forfeit their month's salary during confinement, but are also required to pay escalating delivery fees in government hospitals (See Chapter 6, Section 6.7.2). These are retrogressive measures designed primarily to punish those women who do not conform to the population control policies of the government. Men also play their part in population increase, a point that does not seem to be acknowledged by the government who do not deduct any proportion of a father's salary in the case of the birth of a third or subsequent child. Not only should such legislative measures be removed but instead there should be the adoption of more liberal maternity policies like those in operation in countries of the EEC. Preferably, paid maternity leave should not be less than 90 days for mothers and 90 days for fathers running consecutively so that both parents can raise the child till it is old enough to be sent to a childcare centre. This ideal solution would serve to emphasise the important role of the father as well as of the mother in childrearing and might contribute to a fundamental shift in cultural attitudes towards childrearing.

Another ideal strategy that the Singapore authorities might consider would be the introduction of a parental insurance scheme which has been in force in Sweden since 1973 (17). Under this scheme, the parents may decide which of them will tend to their new born child and receive sickness benefits rates for a total of 180 days. The scheme accords fathers the right to claim sickness benefit for looking after children under 10 during their spouses'

confinement. This would certainly help solve the problem of the present shortage of child-minders in Singapore. As documented in Chapter 6, many white and blue collar married women workers had to withdraw from the labour market upon childbirth due mainly to the fact that the burden of childrearing falls heavily on them. Their mothers and women generations before them were either uneducated and stayed at home after marriage or if they were educated and did work, they did not encounter any problems in hiring such help. However, in the last decade, a change in social and employment trends has set in. With some years of schooling or never even having attended school, girls from working class homes no longer wish to be employed as housemaids and child-minders. They prefer working in the numerous factories where, although they are poorly paid, they have the freedom to mix freely and make friends with both members of their own sex and those of the opposite sex. In industry, they enjoy fixed hours of work and fixed work schedules. Their influx into the factories has led to an acute shortage of domestic servants and the importation of foreign domestic servants. Doubts about the long-term effectiveness and advantages of encouraging the great flow of these foreign workers with differing cultural and social behaviour and practices, have led to government ministers to appeal openly to all married and single unemployed Singapore women to rejoin the labour market. Alternative ways of coping with the problem of domestic work by, for example, job-sharing, by shorter hours of work or by

the provision of public services are at present alien concepts in Singapore and have not been seriously considered by government planners. Nevertheless, the fact that the 44 -hour week traditionally considered sacrosanct in Singapore, is beginning to yield to the introduction of flexi-time by a few firms is an indication that other radical changes may occur in the future.

Discussion so far has centred on the 'normal' nuclear family. The concept of the single parent family has little currency at the present time in Singapore. In the case of divorced parents, the single parent usually finds support within the extended family network. Perhaps legislation looking to the future would have to take into account the possibility of single parents' situations becoming more widespread.

A further solution to the problem of attracting the return to the labour market of married women in particular, would be the establishment of more childcare centres. Unless such facilities are easily accessible to all working mothers, the anticipated return to the labour market of married women is highly questionable. At present, there are insufficient childcare centres sponsored by the government available to working mothers. Neither have all large corporations responded to the urgent need to help solve working mothers' immediate problem of a place and trained personnel to supervise the minding of their offspring. The government should establish more day

nursery and pre-school places and private organisations and individuals should also be encouraged to do so with such incentives as financial or other support, for example, the provision of trained personnel, to assist in operating these centres.

A Sex Discrimination Act, as recommended earlier, could further consolidate the concept of equality in areas not covered by the Equal Pay Act, for example, in such areas as job advertisements and the media. It has been and still is a common practice among companies in Singapore to put up job advertisements which require the services of males alone for middle and top executive posts and females for labour-intensive, low-wage or traditional female-oriented jobs such as typists and sales assistants (See Appendix 9.B). Such a practice no doubt works towards the internalisation of the dichotomy between the sexes on the occupational strata and reinforces the concept of male supremacy (See Appendix 9.B). The media, too, have been responsible for projecting stereotyped images of males and females,(See Chapter 5, Section 5.6), and will doubtless continue to do so unless restrained by some form of anti-sex discrimination legislation. Such legislative changes require a positive shift in societal and cultural attitudes since it is these at the present time that reinforce the inequalities that still exist in the social structure of Singapore.

9.3.3 Changes in cultural attitudes

Although the suggestions made in the above two sections, if implemented in full, would undoubtedly contribute to greater educational, political and economic freedom for all Singapore women and so place them on a more equitable standing with Singapore men, they touch on the periphery of the problem between the sexes in Singapore society.

Changes in the labour market and education cannot occur without changes in the cultural roles of men and women; even if there are disputes in labour market theories about the direction of causality, it is clear that there is a relationship between them. While Singapore male political leaders of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s in particular, have begun to lift some of the barriers thus giving women more opportunities in education and in employment and indeed greater participation in politics and social affairs, yet large numbers of parents of the three major ethnic groups still cling to those cultural attitudes which confine their daughters to secondary roles and status within the home.

Within the home, ideally all parents should encourage and support all their daughters where possible, to the highest levels of achievement of which they are capable. Both sons and daughters should be entitled to equal share of their property and to the same degree of freedom. Both should be trained in housework so that husbands might no longer plead incapacity when called upon to participate in

shared-roles in married life. Decision-making should not be the prerogative of husbands but wives should be encouraged to voice their opinions if a marriage is to be a success. With almost half a million Singapore women in gainful employment today, the contributions that all women make towards the home, to society and to the country's development and economic growth and prosperity, should be highlighted and viewed both publicly and privately from a new and significant perspective.

It may be naive to expect changes in cultural and societal attitudes of such magnitude to materialise within five years or even a decade. The religious teachings of the Muslims and Hindus and the Confucian code of right conduct which regulate the ideology and behaviour of each of the three major ethnic groups, have survived for many centuries. Nevertheless, although customs die hard, their negative effect on women's equality could be modified with the provision of education and employment opportunities which in turn might begin to change such customs.

When in September 1984, the all-male Singapore Singapore Cabinet sanctioned the introduction of compulsory Home Management and Childcare courses for all secondary girl pupils and when, in August 1983, the Cambridge-educated Prime Minister advocated the concept of graduate women breeding for elite future generations, both schemes met with such opposition both from graduate and non-graduate males and females that the government was forced to withdraw the

second scheme. The first scheme is still to be implemented in January 1986 but a precedent of successful resistance has been set.

Women's organisations and women in general have voiced their displeasure and displayed their assertiveness on these issues. The feeling they have generated led in part to the abandonment of the 'breeding for brilliance' initiative. If women and women's organisations continue to be assertive and to fight for their rights, then many of the above recommendations might have a chance of materialising. This may take decades to achieve but an adoption of even one of the recommendations by the government would serve as the starting point for the ultimate achievement of the kind of equitable and egalitarian society endorsed by Tawney (14) and Parker (21). It is both desirable and necessary that Singaporeans in general, and women in particular, should form stronger and more dynamic pressure groups to drive home to the authorities such legislative measures and monitoring procedures that would create the conditions for such social change. But legislative advance needs to go hand in hand with a change of of consciousness. Such a change can come about through the agency of women in Singapore. Greater assertiveness and the desire to fight for equal rights can be inculcated at an early age in school; thus it is in the educational sector that the author finds the hope for the realisation of her vision of a more just and equal society in Singapore in the 21st century.

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65. In Singapore, candidates who sit for the GCE 'O' Level Examinations are awarded grades with point aggregates, for example, A=1 point, B=2 points, C=3 points etc. To enter junior colleges, a pupil must score 17 points and below. This is based on English plus best four subjects.

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82. Scale of textbooks surveyed:

	Total Texts in use	Copies surveyed	% of Total
a. Graduated Exercises in English (Part I)	2	1	50.0%
b. Practical English for the Certificate (Part Two)	2	1	50.0%
c. New PSLE Science Singapore Primary Six	1	1	100.0%
d. NESPE textbooks	36	18	50.0%
e. PEP textbooks	36	18	50.0%
	77	39	50.6%

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APPENDIX 2.A

1. Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore (CDIS). Social and Economic History of Modern Singapore Book 1. Longman Singapore Publishers (Pte) Ltd., Singapore. 1984.

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2. CDIS. Social and Economic History of Modern Singapore Book 2. Longman Singapore Publishers (Pte) Ltd., Singapore. 1985.

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'Hidden from History'

(A)

The above two History texts which were recently compiled and published (Book 1 in 1984, for Secondary One pupils and Book 2 in 1985, for Secondary Two pupils) by the CDIS, a branch of the MOE, Singapore, are classic examples of the neglect of the contributions made by women in the history of modern Singapore, both in the 19th and 20th centuries.

In Book 1, except for references to:

(a) the number of females in Sub-section 10.7, under the heading Sex Ratio, in Chapter 10;
(b) the protection given to girls by the Chinese Protectrate in Sub-section 15.5, under the heading Rescuing Girls from Vice, in Chapter 15; and
(c) the mention of a number of girls' schools, for example, (i) Raffles Girls' School in Sub-section 17.2 under the heading English Schools: Raffles Institution and Raffles Girls' School and, (ii) a few early mission girls' schools, for example, St. Margaret's School, the Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus, St. Anthony Girls' School, The Methodist Girls' School and Fairfield Girls' School in Sub-section 17.3 under the heading English Schools: Mission Schools, in Chapter 17, no other mention was made of women or girls in the remainder of the text.

In Book 2, two references were made of women and girls: the first, a short account of the escape of two European women in particular during the outbreak of the Sepoy Mutiny of February 1915 in Singapore in Chapter 4, and the second, was the participation of Chinese female students in the Hock Lee Bus Company strike of 1955. Three photographs showing (a) the class of girls graduating from the Chung Hwa Girls' School in 1927; (b) a Malay girls' school in 1940 and, (c) Singapore Chinese Girls' School's costume parade in Chapter 18, were the only other significant reference made to Singapore women in the 20th

century.

(B)

Also hidden from the history of modern Singapore were the records of administration, correspondence and events compiled and kept in the Archives and Oral History Department of Singapore. An investigation of the two volumes of the Tan Soo Chye Index to Straits Settlements Records 1800-1875, for example, revealed only 5 references to women (two to the same woman), none of which reflects the significant contributions made by early Singapore women in the development of Singapore. The sixth reference is obtained from a microfilm. A documentation of these 6 records follows:

(a) Reference to a pension for Mrs. Henrietta Kraal in (i) I.22, 1826. p.202 and (ii) V.3, 1829. p.9;
(b) Petition from Elvire Hutchings, seeking financial relief. Vol.A38, 1827. pp.278-79 and pp.327-28;
(c) A reference to Mrs. Darragh, wife of the Reverend F.J. Darragh in Singapore. W.2, 1835. p.79;
(d) Petition of Maria Jeremiah regarding her husband, John Jeremiah. W.2, 1855. p.63; and,
(e) Letter written by Governor John Anderson to the Colonial Office seeking approval for Miss J. McNair, Head Nurse, General Hospital, Singapore, regarding the issue of leave with salary for 6 months. In microfilm GD/41. No.185.

(C)

One of the earliest,best known books written by a Singaporean about the Chinese who settled in Singapore from the earliest days of its foundation, is entitled One Hundred Years of the Chinese in Singapore. It was published by John Murray, London, in 1923. The author was the late Sir Song, O.S. Except for a few short accounts which point to the presence of women and girls in the colony, for example:

(a) Chapter V, which gives a brief account of the work of a Miss Cooke with the Chinese Girls' School;
(b) Chapter VIII, which reports the hanging of the first woman;
(c) Chapter X, which relates the establishments of the Singapore Chinese Girls' School and the Short Street Girls' School and the reference to Dr. Lee Choo Neo, the first woman to graduate from the medical school;
(d) Chapter XI, a brief account of the exploit of a Chinese heroine;
(e) Chapter XII, Dr. Lee Choo Neo's article on "The Life of a Chinese Girl"; and,
(f) Chapter XIII, a reference to the work of: (i) the Chinese Ladies Association and (ii) Mrs. Lee Choon Guan

the rest of the 564 page book concentrated generally on the contributions made by Chinese males to the growth and development of Singapore throughout the 19th century right up to the turn of the 20th century.

Below is the Table of Contents of the book:

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APPENDIX 5.A

Extracts from The Women's Charter (Chapter 47 of the Revised Edition) incorporating all amendments up to 15 August 1981.
Date of Reprint: 15 August 1981.
Attorney-General's Chambers, Singapore.

PART II

MONOGAMOUS MARRIAGES

4. (1) Every person who on the commencement of this Act is lawfully married under any law, religion, custom or usage to one or more spouses shall be incapable, during the continuance of such marriage of contracting a valid marriage under any law, religion, custom or usage with any person other than such spouse or spouses.

(2) Every person who on the commencement of this Act is lawfully married under any law, religion, custom or usage to one or more spouses and who subsequently ceases to be married to such spouse or all such spouses, shall, if he thereafter marries again, be incapable during the continuance of that marriage of contracting a valid marriage with any other person under any law, religion, custom or usage.

5. (1) Every marriage contracted in Singapore or elsewhere in contravention of Section 4 shall be void.

(2) If any male person lawfully married under any law, religion, custom or usage shall during the continuance of such marriage contract a union with a woman, such women shall have no right of succession or inheritance on the death intestate of such male person.

6. Any person lawfully married under any law, religion, custom or usage who during the continuance of such marriage purports to contract a marriage in Singapore or elsewhere under any law, religion, custom or usage in contravention of Section 4 shall be deemed to commit the offence of marrying again during the lifetime of the husband or wife, as the case may be, within the meaning of Section 494 of the Penal Code.

7. Every marriage solemnized in Singapore after the commencement of this Act other than a marriage which is void under the provisions of this Act shall continue until dissolved:
(a) by the death of one of the parties;

(b) by order of a court of competent jurisdiction; or
(c) by a declaration made by a court of competent jurisdiction that the marriage is null and void.

PART III

SOLEMNIZATION OF MARRIAGES

21. (1) Every marriage solemnized in Singapore shall be void unless it is solemnized :
(a) on the authority of a valid marriage licence issued by the Registrar or by a valid special marriage licence granted by the Minister; and,
(b) by the Registrar or a person who has been granted a licence to solemnize marriages.
(3) No marriage shall be solemnized unless the person solemnizing the marriage is satisfied that both the parties to the marriage freely consent to the marriage.

PART VI

RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF HUSBAND AND WIFE

45. (1) Upon the solemnization of marriage, the husband and the wife shall be mutually bound to co-operate with each other in safeguarding the interests of the union and in caring and providing for the children.
(2) The husband and the wife shall have the right separately to engage in any trade or profession or in social activities.
(3) The wife shall have the right to use her own surname and name separately.
(4) The husband and the wife shall have equal rights in the running of the matrimonial household.

47. Subject to the provision of this Act, a married woman shall:
(a) be capable of acquiring, holding and disposing of any property;
(b) be capable of rendering herself, and being rendered liable in respect of any tort, contract, debt or obligation;
(c) be capable of suing and being sued in her own name either in tort or in contract or otherwise and shall be entitled to all remedies and redress for all purposes; and,
(d) be subject to the law relating to bankruptcy and to the enforcement of judgments and orders,
in all respects as if she were a feme sole.

48. (1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, all property which:
(a) immediately before the commencement of this Act was the property (including the separate property) of a married woman or held for her separate use in equity;
(b) belongs at the time of her marriage to a woman married after the commencement of this Act; or,
(c) after the commencement of this Act is acquired by or devolves upon a married woman,
shall belong to her in all respects as if she were a feme sole and may be disposed of accordingly:
Provided that nothing in this Subsection shall:
(i) be construed as affecting adversely the right of any married woman to any property which she had immediately before the commencement of this Act; or
(ii) interfere with or render inoperative any valid restriction upon anticipation or alienation attached to the enjoyment of any property by virtue of any provision contained in any written law in force immediately before the commencement of this Act, or in any instrument executed before such date.

PART VII

MAINTENANCE OF WIFE AND CHILDREN

60. (1) Any married woman whose husband neglects or refuses to provide her reasonable maintenance may apply to a District or Magistrate's Court and such court on due proof thereof may order the husband to pay a monthly allowance or a lump sum for her maintenance.
(2) If any person neglects or refuses to maintain his legitimate or illegitimate child who is unable to maintain himself, a District or Magistrate's Court on due proof thereof may order such person to pay a monthly allowance or a lump sum for the maintenance of such child.

PART IX

DIVORCE

82. (1) Either party to a marriage may petition for divorce on the ground that the marriage has irretrievably broken down.
(2) The court hearing such petition shall, so far as it reasonably can, inquire into the facts alleged as causing or leading to the breakdown of the

marriage and, if satisfied that the circumstances make it just and reasonable to do so, make a decree for its dissolution.

(3) The court hearing a petition for divorce shall not hold the marriage to have broken down irretrievably unless the petitioner satisfies the court of one or more of the following facts, that is to say:

(a) that the respondent has committed adultery and the petitioner finds it intolerable to live with the respondent;

(b) that the respondent has behaved in such a way that the petitioner cannot reasonably be expected to live with the respondent;

(c) that the respondent has deserted the petitioner for a continuous period of at least two years immediately preceding the presentation of the petition;

(d) that the parties to the marriage have lived apart for a continuous period of at least three years immediately preceding the presentation of the petition of the petition and the respondent consents to a decree being granted; or,

(e) that the parties to the marriage have lived apart for a continuous period of at least four years immediately preceding the presentation of the petition.

The remaining parts of the Charter are made up of:

Part I: Definitions of terminologies used in the Charter;

Part IV: This section relates to proceedings if caveat is entered; the granting of special licence and requirements for a valid marriage;

Part V: This section relates to penalties and miscellaneous provisions relating to the solemnization and registration of marriages, and,

Part VIII: This section relates to protection for girls unlawfully forced into prostitution and penalties for the procurers.

APPENDIX 5.B

List of the 23 Women's organisations that come under the umbrella of the Singapore Council of Women's Organisations (SCWO) which was formally registered on 14 February 1980.

1. Asian Women's Welfare Association
2. British Association of Singapore - Women's Group
3. Central Council of Malay Cultural Organisations
4. Chinese Women's Association
5. Cosmopolitan Women's Club
6. Kamala Club
7. Quota Club of Singapore
8. Singapore Association of Personal and Executive Secretaries
9. Singapore Association of Social Workers
10. Singapore Trained Nurses' Association
11. General Conference Women's Society of Christian Service
12. Inner Wheel Club of Singapore East
13. National Baha'i Women's Committee
14. NTUC Women's Programme Committee
15. Singapore Women's Association
16. Singapore Women's Netball Association
17. St.Hilda's School Alumnae Association
18. Singapore Association of Women Lawyers
19. Women's Travel Club of Singapore
20. Young Women's Christian Association
21. Singapore Business & Professional Women's Association
22. Zonta Club of Singapore
23. People's Association Women's Sub-Committee

APPENDIX 6.A

Full-Time Course

Intake Of Trainees For 1982

Level/Course	No. of Intake		
	Female	Total	%
DIPLOMA			
Graphic Design	26	39	67%
Interior Design	9	22	41%
	35	61	57%
INDUSTRIAL TECHNICIAN CERTIFICATE			
Air-Conditioning & Refrigeration Engineering	3	102	3%
Automative Engineering	1	30	3%
Electrical Engineering	30	302	10%
Electronic Engineering	27	219	12%
Furniture Design & Production	5	21	24%
Mechanical Engineering	3	112	3%
Mechanical Engineering Drawing & Design	20	104	19%
	89	890	10%
NATIONAL TRADE CERTIFICATE – GRADE 2			
Air-Conditioning & Refrigeration Mechanics	3	25	12%
Arc Welding	0	38	0%
Architectural Drafting	8	23	35%
Civil/Structural Drafting	11	15	73%
Digital Electronics & Equipment Servicing	8	33	24%
Electrical Fitting & Installation	0	45	0%
Motor Vehicle Mechanics	0	47	0%
Pattern Making	0	6	0%
Plumbing/Pipe Fitting	1	40	3%
Plumbing/Pipe Fitting (Sponsored)	2	18	11%
Precision Machining	11	70	16%
Building Drafting – 'O' Level	27	94	29%
Electronics Servicing – 'O' Level	3	63	5%
Precision Machining – 'O' Level	2	63	3%
Food & Beverage	1	22	5%
Front Office	16	31	52%
Digital Electronic (TAS & TEXAS)	5	16	31%
Food Preparation	1	12	8%
	99	661	15%

APPENDIX 6.A (cont.)

Level/Course	No. of Intake		
	Female	Total	%
NATIONAL TRADE CERTIFICATE – GRADE 3			
Air-Conditioning & Refrigeration Mechanics	0	117	0%
Basic Engineering	226	2242	10%
Boiler Pipe Fitting & Servicing (SASAR)	0	25	0%
Building Drafting	21	93	23%
Dressmaking	74	74	100%
Electrical Fitting & Installation	4	309	1%
Electrical Fitting & Installation (Adult)	5	102	5%
Electronics Servicing	16	302	5%
Furniture Making	0	34	0%
Furniture Production	28	157	18%
General Welding	14	184	8%
General Welding (SASAR)	0	72	0%
General Welding (SASAR-Adult)	0	15	0%
Pattern Making	2	5	40%
Plumbing/Pipe Fitting	0	36	0%
Plumbing/Pipe Fitting (Adult)	0	50	0%
Printing	0	34	0%
Rattan	0	21	0%
Sheetmetal Fabrication	16	40	40%
Upholstery	6	23	27%
Hairdressing	60	60	100%
Heavy Duty Diesel Mechanics	0	140	0%
Maintenance Fitting	13	223	6%
Marine Fitting (SASAR)	0	63	0%
Marine Fitting (SASAR-Adult)	0	15	0%
Marine Fitting (RSH)	0	71	0%
Marine Fitting (Adult)	0	10	0%
Marine Steelwork (SASAR)	1	67	1%
Mechanical Drafting	1	27	5%
Men's Tailoring	14	43	29%
Metal Machining	21	227	9%
Motor Vehicle Mechanics	0	19	0%
Lift & Escalator	0	14	0%
	522	4913	11%
CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCY			
Barbending	0	233	0%
Bricklaying	0	170	0%
Building Carpentry	0	268	0%
Electrical Wiring/Electrical Wiremen	0	100	0%
Industrial Sewing Machine Mechanics	2	13	15%
Printing	0	80	0%
Pipe Fitting	0	250	0%
Plastering	0	80	0%
Tiling	0	80	0%
Woodworking Machine Operations	1	81	1%
	3	1355	0%
BUSINESS STUDIES			
Preliminary Certificate in Business Studies	280	336	83%
Certificate in Business Studies – Accounting	170	259	66%
Certificate in Business Studies – Secretarial Practice	138	148	93%
	588	743	79%
Grand Total	1336	8623	15%

(Source: NTUC, Singapore. 1984)

APPENDIX 6.B

Table 1

PROFESSIONALS, MEN & WOMEN – 1980

Profession	% Men	% Women
Bank Managers	99	1
Directors	Over 99	Well below 1
Chartered Accountants	96	4
Cost and Management Accountants	99	1
Civil Engineers	Over 99	Well below 1
Electrical Engineers	Over 99	Well below 1
Mechanical Engineers	Over 99	Well below 1
Electrical and Electronic Technician Engineers	99	1
Dentists	83	17
General Practitioners	84	16
Surgeons	Over 99	below 1
Paediatricians	84	16
Barristers	90	10
Solicitors	92	8
Chartered Surveyors	Over 99	below 1
Surveying Technicians	Over 99	below 1
Architects	95	5
University Professors	98	2
Advertising Account Executives	83	17
Air Traffic Control Officers	97	3
Driving Examiners	Over 99	Well below 1
Local Authority Chief Executives	Over 99	Well below 1

Source: Figures obtained in 1980 from the professional organisations concerned. In general these apply to England and Wales only. Published in the 1981 Edition of *Equal Opportunities: A Careers Guide for Women and Men*, by Ruth Miller, (Penguin).

APPENDIX 6.B

Table 2

'WOMAN'S WORK'

82% of electrical assembly workers ARE WOMEN
86% of winders/reelers in textiles ARE WOMEN
97% of hand machinists in textiles ARE WOMEN
83% of telephone operators ARE WOMEN
99% of typists and secretaries ARE WOMEN
82% of shop assistants ARE WOMEN
91% of office cleaners ARE WOMEN
92% of nurses ARE WOMEN
11.5% of managers ARE WOMEN

Source: 1971 Census of Population.

APPENDIX 6.C

TABLE 1

PROFESSIONALS, MEN AND WOMEN IN THE SINGAPORE LABOUR FORCE, 1980

PROFESSION	MEN	WOMEN	% MEN	% WOMEN
Managers	34,527	4,042	89.5	10.5
Accountants	2,242	1,367	62.1	37.9
Civil Engineers	1,200	29	97.6	2.4
Electrical and Electronics Engineers	1,777	85	95.4	4.6
Mechanical Engineers	2,492	14	99.4	0.6
Chemical Engineers	384	17	95.8	4.2
Dentists	167	79	67.9	32.1
Medical Doctors	1,248	512	70.9	29.1
Lawyers	665	348	65.6	34.4
Judges	19	0	100.0	0.0
Surveyors	136	4	97.1	2.9
Architects and Town Planners	489	119	80.4	19.6
University Lecturers	845	275	75.4	24.6
Economists	129	67	65.8	34.2
Chemists	176	71	71.3	28.7
Executive Officers	8,963	3,800	70.2	29.8

(Source: Report on the Census of Population, Singapore 1980)

APPENDIX 6.C

TABLE 2

'WOMAN'S WORK' IN SINGAPORE

98.0 %	Domestic service workers
86.2 %	Receptionists
94.2 %	Stenographers and typists
81.9 %	Computing machine operators
78.0 %	Telephone and telegraph operators
55.2 %	Clerical workers
71.1 %	Librarians,archivists and curators
65.1 %	Teachers
93.0 %	Nurses
100.0 %	Midwives
80.6 %	Tailors,dressmakers,sewers and upholsterers
69.5 %	Electrical and electronic workers
81.6 %	Spinners,weavers,knitters and dyers

(Source: Report on the Census of Population, Singapore 1980)

APPENDIX 7.A

TABLE 1

List of Favorable Images Assigned to the Male Descending Order of Frequency

Frequency	*Images*	*Frequency*	*Images*
82	Brave	14	Patriotic
75	Popular	13	Duteous
54	Strong	13	Faithful
51	Kind	13	Friendly
50	Achiever	12	Idealist
49	Innovative	12	Self-respecting
48	Adventurous	11	Liberal
44	Hard-working	11	Studious
40	Generous	10	Gallant
39	Educated	10	Heroic
38	Clever	10	Just
34	Compassionate	10	Peace-loving
32	Honest	10	Respected
31	Intelligent	9	Disciplinarian
30	Noble	8	Orator
30	Wise	7	Thankful
29	Determined	6	Earnest
29	Political Activist	6	Gentle
28	Commanding	6	Humorous
26	Humble	6	Polite
24	Civic Spirited	5	Diplomatic
24	Loyal	5	Rational
24	Self-sacrificing	5	Tall
24	Simple	4	Agile
24	Smart	4	Innocent
21	Persevering	4	Romantic
21	Proud	4	Secular
20	Loving	3	Introspective
19	Handsome	3	Philosophic
18	Accommodating	3	Practical
18	Scholarly	3	Protective
18	Skillful	2	Competitive
17	Humanitarian	2	Divine
16	Hospitable	2	Inspirational
16	Resourceful	2	Persuasive
15	Ambitious	2	Saintly
15	Careful	2	Spiritualist
15	Cheerful	2	Vigilant
15	Confident	1	Aristocratic
15	Independent	1	Beautiful
15	Religious	1	Big
14	Brilliant	1	Classicist
14	Cultured	1	Immortality Seeker
14	Devoted	1	Universalist
14	Patient		

Source: Kalia,1979.

APPENDIX 7.A

Images Assigned to the Male and Female Characters

Table 3 lists, in a descending order of frequencies, the favorable images counted for the female.

TABLE 2

List of Favorable Images Assigned to the Female Descending Order of Frequency

Frequency	*Images*	*Frequency*	*Images*
42	Beautiful	5	Persevering
23	Brave	4	Adventurous
23	Kind	4	Duteous
20	Loving	4	Honest
19	Faithful	4	Humanitarian
19	Hardworking	4	Humorous
18	Compassionate	4	Patriotic
17	Generous	4	Respected
17	Loyal	3	Affectionate
14	Educated	3	Careful
14	Independent	3	Confident
13	Determined	3	Innocent
13	Hospitable	3	Inspirational
13	Self-sacrificing	3	Scholarly
12	Political Activist	3	Self-respecting
10	Accommodating	3	Smart
10	Devoted	3	Wise
10	Innovative	2	Brilliant
10	Popular	2	Holy
9	Cultured	2	Just
9	Proud	2	Practical
9	Religious	2	Propitious
8	Agile	2	Simple
8	Clever	1	Artistic
8	Noble	1	Child prodigy
7	Cheerful	1	Diplomatic
7	Civic spirited	1	Disciplinarian
7	Skillful	1	Divine
6	Achiever	1	Earnest
6	Friendly	1	Gentle
6	Protective	1	Humble
6	Strong	1	Liberal
5	Ambitious	1	Orator
5	Commanding	1	Peace-loving
5	Idealist	1	Persuasive
5	Intelligent	1	Poetic
5	Motherly	1	Serious
5	Patient	1	Thankful

Source: Kalia,1979.

APPENDIX 7.B

Recent variants of "Ethnography" among educational researchers

Variant	Researchers
Anthroethnography	Spindler,G.,1981
Anthropological educational ethnography	Delamont,S.& Atkinson,P.,1980
Anthropological ethnography of schooling	Spindler,G.,1981
Anthropopedagogy	Morin,A.,1980
Blitzkrieg ethnography	Rist,R.C.,1980
Classical ethnography	Mehan,H.,1980
Classroom ethnography	Hammersley,M.,1980
Constitutive ethnography	Mehan,H.,1978
Contract ethnography	Wolcott,H.,1975
Cooperative ethnography	Hymes,D.,1980
Educational ethnography	Spindler,G.,1981
Educational ethnology	Hymes,D.,1980
Ethnographic approach	Fitzsimmons,S.J.,1975
Ethnographic case studies	Herriott,R.,1977
Ethnographic methods	Lutz,F.W.,1980
Ethnographic monitoring	Hymes,D.,1980
Ethnographies of classroom life	Hamilton,D.,1981
Ethnography and policy making	Mulhauser,F.,1975
Ethnography of schooling	Wolcott,H.,1975
Ethnopedagogy	Burger,H.,1971
Evaluation ethnography	Rist,R.C.,1980
Focused ethnography	Erickson,F.,1977
Macroethnography	Lutz,F.W.,1980
Microethnography of the classroom	Smith,L.M.,1967
Neoethnography	Bullivant,B.,1978
New ethnography	Erickson,F.,1973
Psychoethnography	Spindler,G.,1981
Socioethnography	Spindler,G.,1981
Sociological educational ethnography	Delamont,S.& Atkinson,P.,1980

Source: Cited by Smith,L.M. in Encyclopedia of Educational Research Volume 2 (Fifth Edition). The Free Press,New York. 1982.

APPENDIX 7.C

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS (RE:CHAPTER 7)

I. Record of lessons observed in the 8 schools in Singapore in June and July 1984.

School	Lesson	Age group of pupils
1. A	Story-telling	3 plus to 4 years old
	Drawing	4 plus to 5 years old
	Counting	5 plus to 6 years old
	Story-telling	5 plus to 6 years old
2. B	Story-telling	3 plus to 4 years old
	Music and Dance	4 plus to 5 years old
	Drawing	5 plus to 6 years old

School	Lesson	Class
3. C	English (Workbook)	Primary Two
	Mathematics (Quiz)	Primary Three
	English (Comprehension)	Primary Five
	Mathematics	Primary Six
4. D	Art/Crafts	Primary One
	Health Education	Primary Two
	Reading	Primary Three
	English (Comprehension)	Primary Four
	English (Comprehension)	Primary Five
	Story-telling	Primary Six
5. E	General Science	Secondary One
	English (Comprehension)	Secondary Two
	Science (Physics)	Secondary Three
	Mathematics	Secondary Four
6. F	History	Secondary One
	English (Grammar)	Secondary Two
	Literature	Secondary Three
	English (Comprehension)	Secondary Three
7. G	General Paper	Pre-University One
	Literature (Shakespeare)	Pre-University Two
	Literature (Poetry)	Pre-University Two
	General Paper	Pre-University Two
8. H	Literature (Novel)	Pre-University One
	Chemistry	Pre-University One
	Accountancy	Pre-University Two
	General Paper	Pre-University Two

II. Addendum on methodology applied in classroom observations

The author produced her account of classroom interaction by using the following techniques: observation, taking notes, interviewing pupils and teachers and working to a prepared chart containing a list of checkpoints as guidelines. These include, for example:

1. Teacher asks questions of boy/girl pupils (Two columns)
2. Teacher looks at boy/girl pupils (Two columns)
3. Teacher praises or encourages boy/girl pupils (Two columns)
4. Teacher accepts or uses ideas of boy/girl pupils (Two columns)
5. Teacher lectures
6. Teacher criticises boy/girl pupils (Two columns)
7. Boy/girl pupils' responses to teacher's questions (Two columns)
8. Talk by boy/girl pupils which they initiate (Two columns)

As the lesson proceeded, a tick was made against each of the categories, in the appropriate boy/girl column. At the end of the lesson, the number of ticks were totalled up thus helping to provide a fuller and clearer picture of the flow of interaction that took place during the lesson.

III. Total number of teachers interviewed = 33

1. School A = 4 teachers
2. School B = 3 teachers
3. School C = 4 teachers
4. School D = 6 teachers
5. School E = 4 teachers
6. School F = 4 teachers
7. School G = 4 teachers
8. School H = 4 teachers

APPENDIX 7.D

Your responses will be treated as confidential

QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY OF TEACHER BEHAVIOUR

Instructions: (1) You need not write your name.

(2) Please fill in the name of your school, class, your age and sex.

(3) For Questions 1 and 2, please put a tick (✓) in the column for the answer of your choice.

Name of School _____ Age _____

Class _____ Sex _____

Question 1

Part A

Who do male teachers select more often to be:

	Boys	Girls	Both Boys & Girls
(a) school prefects;			
(b) school librarians;			
(c) class monitors;			
(d) games captains.			

Part B

Who do female teachers select more often to be:

	Boys	Girls	Both Boys & Girls
(a) school prefects;			
(b) school librarians;			
(c) class monitors;			
(d) games captains.			

Question 2

Part A

In a mixed class, who do male teachers

	Boys	Girls	Both Boys & Girls
(a) praise more often for good behaviour;			
(b) punish more often for misbehaviour;			
(c) choose more often to answer questions;			
(d) choose more often to lead a debate;			
(e) choose more often to set up a practical in a science lesson;			
(f) look at more often in class?			

Part B

In a mixed class, who do female teachers

	Boys	Girls	Both Boys & Girls
(a) praise more often for good behaviour;			
(b) punish more often for misbehaviour;			
(c) choose more often to answer questions;			
(d) choose more often to lead a debate;			
(e) choose more often to set up a practical in a science lesson;			
(f) look at more often in class?			

Question 3

What profession/job would you like to have in future?

_____

Question 4

Your comments, views on male/female equality in Singapore today

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

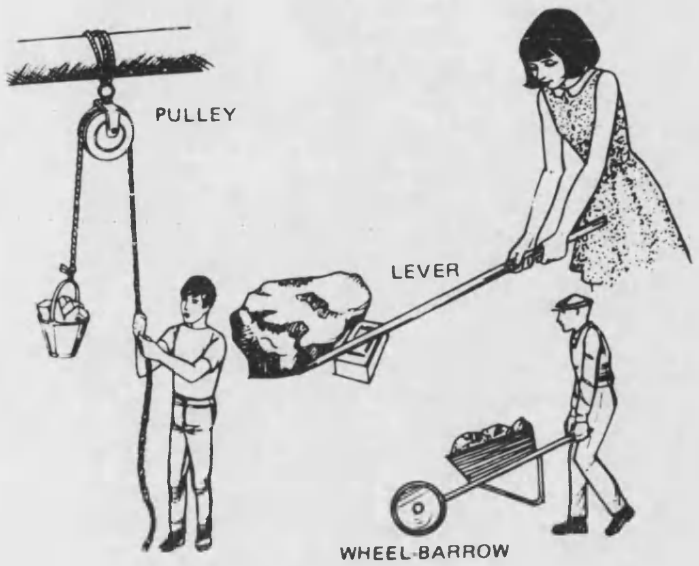
_____

_____

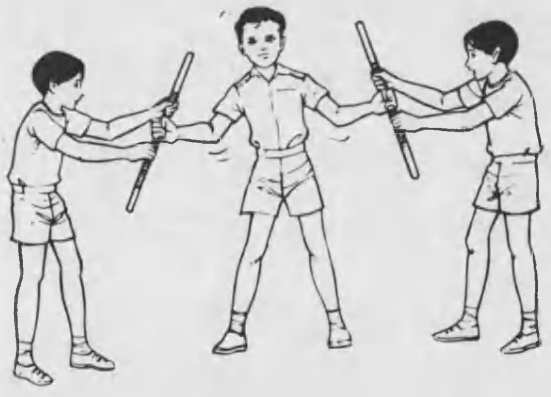
THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX 7.E

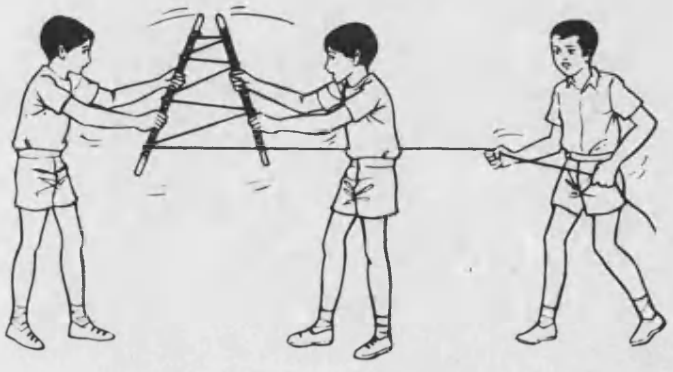
Examples of pictures used in New PSLE Science Singapore Primary Six



Lesson on "Common Machines Used Every Day" p.17



Lesson on "A Small Force Can Overcome A Bigger Force" p.19



CHANGING THE DIRECTION OF FORCE

Lesson on "Changing The Direction Of Force With Gears" p.28

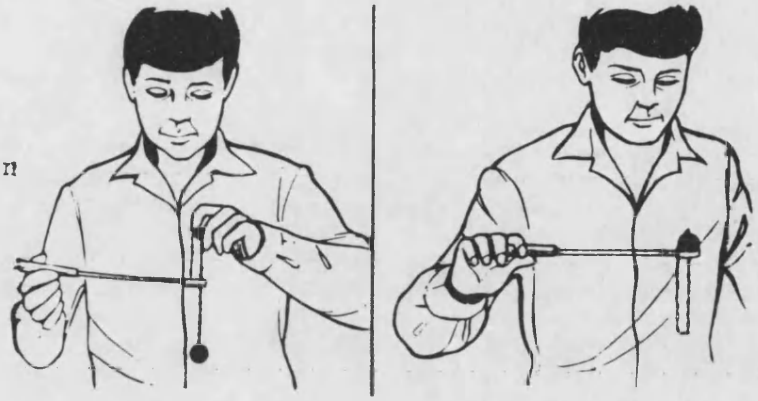
Lesson on "Electricity"
p. 87

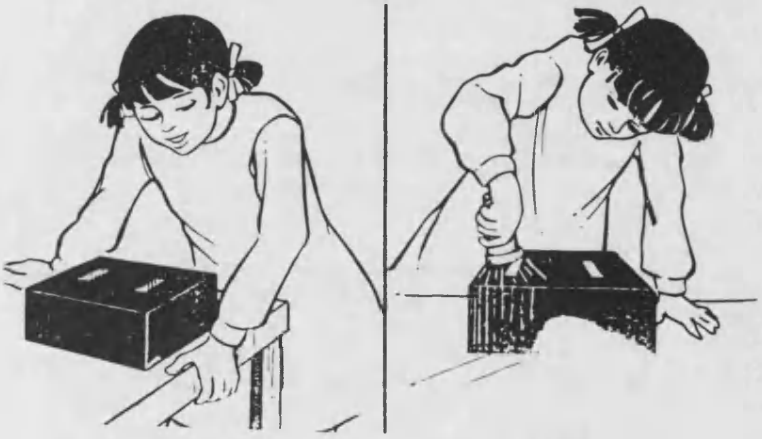
SOURCES OF HEAT

Lesson on "Sources Of Heat"
p.35

THE BALL AND RING APPARATUS

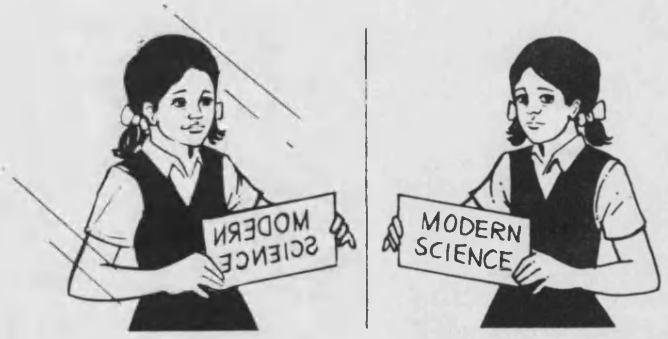
Lesson on "Expansion Of Solids" p.51



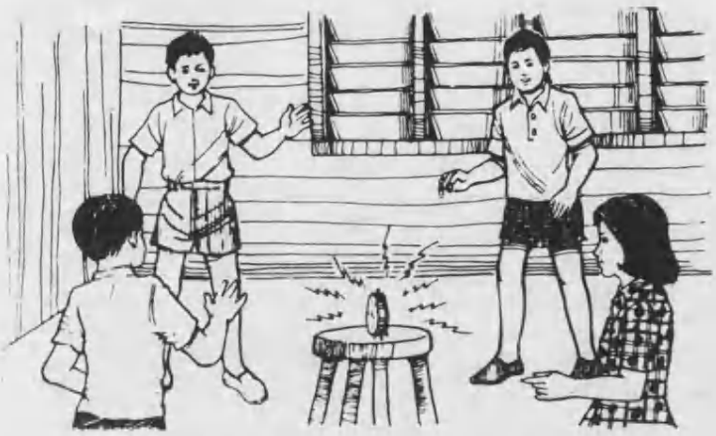


Lesson on "Properties Of Light" p.62

Lesson on "Properties Of Light" p.66



Lesson on "Length,Area and Volume" p.197



TO SHOW THAT SOUND TRAVELS IN ALL DIRECTIONS

Lesson on "How Sound Travels" p.75

Lesson on "Position Of People" p.173

Lesson on "Position Of People" p.173

APPENDIX 7.F

Samples of sexist pictures in NESPE and PEP primary textbooks in use in Singapore at present.

(1) NESPE Course Book 3A

The female teacher and the female school attendant - p.6

The salesgirl and the female cashier - p.26

p.23

p.50

p.50

The busy housewives

(2) NESPE WORKBOOK 5A

The male doctor - p.3

(4) PEP TEXTBOOK 4A

The seamstress - p.32

(3) PEP BASIC READER 2A

The strongman image - p.8

APPENDIX 8.A

FULL TRANSCRIPT OF ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH DR. GANDHI

SECTION 1 - THE PAST

Part A (Views and opinions on familial and personal relationships and educational and employment opportunities of Singapore men and women in the the last fifty years)

Question 1. Can you recall who was mainly responsible for: (a) your upbringing and (b) your socialisation?

Dr.Gandhi: My mother was mainly responsible for both my upbringing and socialisation. It was she who bathed, fed and nursed my brothers, sisters and I. Our first lessons in good manners and behaviour were taught by her. My father did contribute by playing with us and coaching us in our lessons whenever he was free. However, the greater part of my teenage and early womanhood years were under the care and influence of my mother since my father died at the age of forty.

Question 2(a) What were your childhood days like?

(b) Were you free to roam about and mix freely with your brothers and the boys in your neighbourhood?

Dr.Gandhi: I had an interesting childhood with both educated father and mother. They were both

both English teachers in government service. They opened the children to all sorts of vistas - experiences we would not have got in a more conservative, uneducated family. They made us see things and understand people as people. There was free access to socialisation. We were able to roam about with our boy cousins and the boys in the neighbourhood. In fact, my best friends in my childhood days were boys.

Question 3(a) Were you ever segregated from the male members of your family?

(b) If Yes, at what age did that take place?

Dr.Gandhi: There was no segregation in general among family members. From the age of puberty, although associations with members of the opposite sex was allowed, it was generally not encouraged.

Question 4. In your time, did parents in general discriminate between the sexes as regards issues like:

(a) Which child should be given the best education?

(b) Which child should stop schooling in times of financial difficulties?

(c) Which child should be given more property/no property?

Dr.Gandhi: (a) While other Asian parents then and now

generally have the tendency to favour sons by giving them the best education, my parents treated us all equally. Despite my father's early demise, mother saw to it that my sisters and I had the best education possible.

(b) Again, generally Asian parents would withdraw girls from schools in times of financial difficulties.

(c) My parents did not leave us much property but we all had a fair share. In other Indian families, boys normally get the lion's share. However, in preparation for their daughters' marriage, parents usually set aside a reasonable sum, ranging from a few hundred to thousands of dollars, depending on the wealth and status of families, for their daughters as dowries. With the other major ethnic groups, as far as I'm aware of, it is usually sons too who benefit most.

Question 5. What motivated you to pursue higher/tertiary education?

Dr.Gandhi: I was keen to further my education so as to prove that girls can be as good as boys academically in a 'male' area and to be an asset to society.

Question 6. How did your parents react to your decision to go for higher studies?

Dr.Gandhi: My father had passed away when I completed my Cambridge 'O' levels. My mother was delighted that I should take up medicine. She was confident of my success as I had a good school record. She made many sacrifices for all the children.

Question 7(a) How did you meet your husband?

(b) Was your marriage based on romantic love or was it an arranged marriage?

Dr.Gandhi: I met my husband in medical school. We were undergraduates then. Our marriage was definitely based on romantic love. Whoever heard of an arranged marriage between an Indian and a Chinese? It was years before my in-laws could accept our marriage.

Question 8. Did you encounter difficulties in finding a job after graduation?

Dr.Gndhi: No difficulty in getting a job since there was a shortage of doctors. However, I encountered job difficulties within a job. I was first in government service, then left to join the City Council. Later it was back to government service after the City Council was absorbed into the government body. A couple of years later, I joined the medical faculty of the university and has been with the university since then.

Question 9. In employment, did employers discriminate

between the sexes particularly as regards:

(a) selection and recruitment?

(b) advancement and promotion?

(c) salary scale?

(d) working hours?

(e) retrenchment?

Dr.Gandhi: (a) Of course. Very strong discrimination persists. I make no bones about it. A woman has to work ten times or more than a man to get anywhere. Men just come out with these bland statements, these very repetitive statements about women being the weaker sex, having babies, always sick, always in tears and are highly emotional.

(b) Advancement and promotion generally limited to men. There was always the man there though he was less qualified and able.

(c) In the private sector, women definitely receive less pay in the same job.

(d) Generally, there's no difference in working hours.

(e) Before 1973, when Singapore was struggling through the initial stages of independence and the threat of complete British withdrawal from the republic, the economy was less buoyant. There were numerous cases of companies which folded up and women bore the brunt of retrenchments in the private sector.

Question 10. In your time, were women actively involved in politics?

Dr.Gandhi: Only a handful. There were, however, a larger number of women involved with trade union work.

Question 11(a) Can you recall some outstanding women political personalities?

(b) What contributions did they make to society?

Dr.Gandhi: (a) In the early 1950s, there was Mrs. Amy Ede. In the 1950s through to the 1960s, there were Mrs. Seow Peck Leng, Mrs. Felice Leon-Soh and Madam Chan Choy Siong.

(b) Though these were the first few women to take up politics, except for Madam Chan, they made no great contribution. Madam Chan was the stalwart, female figure of the PAP, responsible for setting up a number of women's committees which championed for the rights of women. The other three and other less known female political figures were on the whole, docile. They let their male counterparts take the leading roles maintaining traditional Asian concepts of remaining in the background while men asserted their influence and superiority.

Part B (Views and opinions as to whether sexist attitudes existed in schools and institutions of higher learning in Singapore since the 1950s)

Question 1. What type of school did you attend?

Dr. Gandhi: I attended an all girls' Methodist school in Ipoh where I completed both my primary and secondary education. I came to Singapore for my tertiary education.

Question 2. Were boys and girls taught the same subjects in schools then?

Dr.Gandhi: Boys and girls studied the same syllabus though secondary girls were taught Home Economics.

Question 3. How did teachers (both males and females) generally react to: (a) boys and (b) girls?

Dr.Gandhi: There were no boys in my school, so I'm afraid I cannot give a fair answer. From heresay, however, teachers generally established better rapport with boy than girl pupils.

Question 4. Were boys generally given preferential treatment by (a) teachers and (b) principals?

Dr.Gandhi: Only in exceptional cases, are teachers and principals guilty of practising preferential treatment.

Question 5. Did teachers tend to encourage boys more often than girls to perform better in their studies?

Dr.Gandhi: Teachers tended to encourage all boys regardless of their academic ability, to do well. In the case of girls, while the more

academically inclined are encouraged to do well, it was not generally instilled in them to be ambitious or assertive.

Question 6. In the textbooks used, do you recall whether sex-role stereotyping existed, for example, males seen as doctors, engineers, the tough and handymen while females were seen as housewives and mothers, the gentle, weak and helpless beings?

Dr.Gandhi: Although sex-role stereotyping was not wholly emphasised, evidence of sexist tendencies prevailed in textbooks. Women were teachers, nurses, secretaries and clerks. Women weren't engineers, surgeons or architects. While men were seen as tough, self-reliant and independent, women were seen as weak, fragile and incapable of supporting themselves.

Question 7. Was the spoken and written language (that is, examples and exercises given on the blackboard and for written work) of (a) male teachers and (b) female teachers, male-centred or female-centred?

Dr.Gandhi: Tendency of both male and female teachers to use male-centred language in oral and written forms.

Question 8. In the History lessons that you had, can you recall having learnt anything about the

achievements of women through the ages or were you taught only the great deeds of men?

Dr.Gandhi: In my time we studied British history. We were taught the lives and achievements of a few women, for example, Queen Elizabeth I, Mary, Queen of Scots, and Florence Nightingale. We learnt nothing about Asian women. Without doubt, there was more emphasis on the great heroic deeds of men. Women only played secondary roles.

Question 9. With a mixed class, were the boys and girls given different sets of projects to do in: (a)Arts and Crafts, (b)Geography, (c)History (d)Language/Literature?

Dr.Gandhi: From I what I heard from my friends in mixed classes, both boys and girls were given the same projects to do in the subjects you listed.

Question 10. During P.E. lessons, did boys and girls carry out the same activities?

Dr.Gandhi: Both boys and girls did the same basic exercises but with different intensity. Girls were generally confined to girls' games like netball and table-tennis while boys played football, rugby and hockey, for example.

Question 11. In the college or university you attended,

(a) Were all the courses available, open to

women?

(b) How did the lecturers perceive women students then?

Dr.Gandhi: (a) All the courses were open to women but the early undergraduates tended to avoid 'male' areas such as engineering, medicine, dentistry and the hard sciences and to opt for the Arts and Social Sciences. I was one of less than fifty female students in the medical faculty.

(b) I speak for my own faculty. On the whole, my lecturers and professors thought highly of the female students. Both male and female students were equally treated and encouraged.

SECTION 2 - THE PRESENT

Part A (Views and opinions of the role and position of Singapore women today)

Question 1. How are women seen in Singapore today: (a) in the family? (b) in childrearing?

Dr.Gandhi: Women still have to have the babies but I feel that men should play an equal part in the upbringing of children. I've always said that a child has two parents not one. It's still very much a thing that men have yet to accept that they have a part in childrearing although I might say very optimistically, that the younger generation of young men are

showing a much better approach to women, to women's ambitions than ever before. Women are still in charge of the household but among the younger educated couples, they are beginning to get some assistance from their spouses.

Question 2(a) Does your spouse dominate the family?

(b) If Yes, in what ways?

Dr.Gandhi: My husband (he died five years ago) never dominated the family. Our marriage was a partnership. My husband encouraged me all the time to get involved in women's issues, to strive and fight for better equality for women. He never over-ruled me. We had a very good relationship.

Question 3. Did he assist you in running the household, for example, in washing the dishes, mopping the floor, doing the shopping etc. ?

Dr.Gandhi: He used to give the children their night feed. On weekends, we went marketing together. On the servant's day off, he assisted with the washing up of the dishes.

Question 4. Do you feel that Singapore women today enjoy a high legal status compared to their mothers and grandmothers?

Dr.Gandhi: Singapore women today do enjoy a high legal status compared to their forebears. The Women's Charter ensures their rights and they

enjoy privileges which were denied women generations before them.

Question 5. With emancipation and with it better educational and job opportunities, more legal rights and social recognition, do you feel that Singapore women today are totally equal to Singapore men?

Dr.Gandhi: Despite these recently acquired privileges and opportunities, women are still generally seen as second class citizens. Total equality is not present.

Question 6: In which areas do you feel women are still subordinate and discriminated against?

Dr.Gandhi: Within the home, the working married women are generally still responsible for housekeeping and childrearing. In employment, many women are still getting lower pay than men. In my own department, for example, only three women are holding top posts in contrast to about ten men. The employment figures of Singapore women in any category are lower except in labour-intensive industries. The employment of women in the professional, executive and managerial sector, is extremely low.

In employment, women are manipulated too much, far too much, for example, in retrenchment. Whether they are good or

better, women are the first to go. When employers want them, they woo them and give them incentives. I think this is not right. They should take them on their own value. Why can't a woman be employed and be very successful in employment. She's got similar potentials and this I feel, is something that has still got to be reckoned with by men. Employers still hang on to these old ideas that women are not capable of forming their own opinions. A woman's opinion is not much to be listened to unless of course by some chance or some way, she's got to the top and echoes somebody's views, usually a male's, then she becomes acceptable. If she gives her own views, she's not. And they think she's neglecting her family if she becomes too open and too involved in outside affairs. That's the general sort of feeling I have.

Part B (Views and opinions about sexist attitudes in school practice in Singapore today)

Question 1. Do you perceive any changes in sexist attitudes in the way textbooks are written today?

Dr.Gandhi: Yes, some changes have taken place. Today's textbooks contain less sex-role stereotyping and more female-centred exercises and pictures.

Question 2: Do teachers, both males and females today, still tend to use male-centred language (both verbal and written) in their teaching?

Dr.Gandhi: From my children's work in school, I would say more female-centred exercises are given by teachers today than in my time but still the proportion of male-centred exercises is higher.

Question 3. Do teachers still tend to favour boys and give them more encouragement than girls in their studies?

Dr.Gandhi: I should think that teachers would encourage both boys and girls today since many girls have proved themselves to be as good if not better than boys in many schools.

Question 4. Are boys still seen as tough and hardy and intelligent, while girls are seen as fragile, helpless and slow-witted?

Dr.Gandhi: Boys are still seen as tough and hardy and some girls are fragile but not helpless and certainly not slow-witted. As for intelligence, boys are no longer classified the intelligent species. I'm sure you'll agree with me?

SECTION 3 - THE FUTURE

Question 1. Is a totally egalitarian society possible in Singapore, perhaps by the next decade?

Dr.Gandhi: I don't think so. The subjugation of women has lasted for centuries. Almost a quarter century has passed by since the introduction of the Women's Charter and yet, no legislation on equal pay for men and women in employment has been passed to date.

Question 2(a) How in your view can women in Singapore, a capitalist society, acquire greater: (i) academic, (ii) legal and (iii) political freedom?

(b) Do you think that they want greater freedom in these areas?

Dr.Gandhi: (a) I feel that women should begin to adopt a different attitude to a successful professional or employment career by opting for Science and Technology-based courses in institutions of higher learning. Parents and all women in particular, should fight for equal opportunities for all girls to be taught Technical Education in secondary schools to enhance their future job prospects. There is obviously a need for all women to be made aware of their legal rights. There are at present, no woman high court judges or any woman minister in charge of women's affairs. This is where women's organisations can step in and use their influence to seek a more proportionate

balance in the number of females in high government offices. To gain greater political freedom entails more women's active participation in politics and in trade union movements. Generally, women need to assert themselves if they are to be counted.

(b) I'm not sure about those women in their middle ages, the majority of whom are uneducated and appear to be resigned to the traditional Asian concept of female inferiority. Women in their twenties and thirties who belong to the new generation of educated women, exposed to Western ideas and practices which place more emphasis on shared-roles in the home and female equality in employment and in society, would generally want greater freedom in these areas.

Question 3. Do you feel that there is a need for changes in the sexist attitude in school practice, for example, in (a) the curriculum, (b) learning materials and (c) language (both verbal and written used) in Singapore today?

Dr.Gandhi: I personally feel that there is a need for changes in these three areas. As I mentioned earlier, all girls should be taught Technical Education. Besides, boys, on the other hand, should attend classes in Home Management and Childcare. As future fathers, they should be

taught how to cook, sew and feed the babies then they would be able to share in the housework and in the childrearing process. All too often they escape from assisting in the housework by giving the excuse that they have not been taught to handle these chores. While Asian mothers are generally reluctant to train their sons in housework since they still consider the kitchen a woman's place, then the school could be the training ground for all boys.

APPENDIX 9.A

Extracts from: A Guide to the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, published by the the Home Office, which applies to the whole of Great Britain. The Act was extended to Northern Ireland by a statutory instrument: Sex Discrimination (N. Ireland) Order 1976. The Act makes sex discrimination unlawful in employment, training and related matters (where discrimination against married persons is also dealt with), in education, in the provision of goods, facilities and services, and in the disposal and management of premises. The Act gives individuals a right of direct access to the civil courts and industrial tribunals for legal remedies for unlawful discrimination.

2 Definitions of discrimination

Sex discrimination

2.3 The Act defines two kinds of sex discrimination which it is convenient to call *direct* and *indirect* sex discrimination.

s.1(1)(*a*) **2.4** *Direct sex discrimination* arises where a person treats a woman, on the grounds of her sex, less favourably than he treats, or would treat, a man. In considering whether a particular kind of treatment of a woman constitutes direct sex discrimination it is necessary to enquire:

(a) whether it was less favourable than the treatment which was (or would be) accorded to a man and, if so,

(b) whether the less favourable treatment was on the grounds of her sex, i.e. whether the *reason* for the treatment was that the woman was a woman.

It is not necessary, however, to show that a person openly expressed an intention to treat someone else less favourably on the grounds of sex; it will be possible in many instances to infer a discriminatory motive from all the circumstances in which the treatment was given. In proceedings relating to direct discrimination the court or tribunal will consider all the evidence in the case to see what inferences, if any, it can properly draw about the respondent's motives.

s.1(1)(*b*) **2.5** *Indirect sex discrimination* consists of treatment which may be described as equal in a formal sense as between the sexes but discriminatory in its effect on one sex. Indirect sex discrimination arises where a person applies to a woman who is seeking some benefit from him (e.g. a job) a condition or requirement with which she must comply in order to qualify for, or obtain, the benefit, and where the condition or requirement satisfies *all* of the following criteria:

(a) it is applied, or would be applied, by him equally to men and to women;

(b) it is such that the proportion of women who can comply with it is considerably smaller than the proportion of men who can comply with it;

(c) it is to the detriment of the woman in question because she cannot comply with it; and

(d) it cannot be shown by the person applying it to be justifiable irrespective of the sex of the person to whom it is applied.

If an employer were to apply a requirement that all his clerks should be 6 feet tall, it would seem that a woman who was refused a job as a clerk with him because of her height would be able to make out a case of indirect sex discrimination, since all the criteria (a) to (d) would be satisfied. On the other hand, while a requirement of technical qualifications for a job as a technologist might satisfy criteria (a), (b) and (c), it would probably not satisfy (d): if the requirement could be shown to be justifiable having regard to the nature of the job, it would not constitute indirect sex discrimination.

Comparisons in sex discrimination cases

s.5(3) **2.7** The *relevant* circumstances of a woman who complains that she has been discriminated against must be the *same as*, or *not materially different from*, those of the man with whose treatment she is comparing her own. To take an example, a woman who claims she has been discriminated against by being refused a loan will have to compare her treatment with that of a man of comparable financial standing.

s.1(2) **2.8** In any situation in which the treatment accorded to men and or women differs, or would differ, according to marital status, the comparison which is to be made in determining whether a woman has suffered direct sex discrimination must be with the treatment which is, or would be, accorded to a man *of the same marital status*. To take an example which combines the points made in this paragraph and in paragraph 2.7, if an employer treats his women employees who have children differently according to whether they are married or unmarried, the relevant comparison for the purposes of an allegation by an unmarried woman with a child that she has been discriminated against by her employer will be between the treatment she has received and the employer's treatment of an unmarried man with a child.

Discrimination against married persons in the employment field

2.9 The Act also defines direct and indirect discrimination against married persons in, *and only in*, the employment field.

s.3(1)(*a*) **2.10** *Direct discrimination against a married person* arises where, in circumstances relevant for the purposes of any provision in Part II of the Act (i.e. in the employment field), a person treats a married person of either sex, on the ground of his or her marital status, less favourably than he treats or would treat an unmarried person of the same sex. This definition would encompass, for example, an explicit marriage bar.

s.3(1)(*b*) *Indirect discrimination against a married person* arises where a person applies to a married person who is seeking some benefit in the employment field a condition or requirement which the married person has to comply with in order to qualify for, or obtain, the benefit, and where the condition or requirement satisfies *all* of the following criteria:

(a) it is applied, or would be applied, by him equally to a married person and to an unmarried person of the same sex;

(b) it is such that the proportion of married persons who can comply with it is considerably smaller than the proportion of unmarried persons of the same sex who can comply with it;

(c) it is to the detriment of the married person in question because he or she cannot comply with it;

(d) it cannot be shown by the person applying it to be justifiable irrespective of the marital status of the person to whom it is applied.

2.11 What is said in paragraphs 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6 on the definitions of direct and indirect sex discrimination applies similarly to the definitions of direct and indirect discrimination against married persons in the employment field.

Comparisons in cases of discrimination against married persons

s.5(3) **2.12** The guidance in paragraph 2.7 on comparisons in cases of direct and indirect sex discrimination also applies to comparisons in cases of direct and indirect discrimination against married persons. In addition, in any comparison of the treatment which is accorded to married persons with the treatment which is, or would be, accorded

to unmarried persons, or in any comparison of the ability of married and unmarried persons to comply with a condition or requirement, the married and the unmarried persons to be compared must be *of the same sex*.

Victimisation

2.13 The Act also defines as discrimination the victimisation of a person because that person has, for example, asserted his or her rights
s.4(1) under the Act or the Equal Pay Act. Victimisation arises where, in any of the situations to which the Act applies, a person (*the discriminator*) treats another person of either sex (*the person victimised*) less favourably than he treats, or would treat, other persons on the ground that the person victimised has done (or intends to do, or is suspected of having done or intending to do) any of the following:

(a) brought proceedings against the discriminator or anyone else under the Sex Discrimination Act or the Equal Pay Act;

(b) given evidence or information in connection with proceedings brought under either Act by another person against the discriminator or anyone else;

(c) otherwise done anything under, or by reference to, either Act in relation to the discriminator or anyone else (e.g. by giving evidence or information to the Equal Opportunities Commission during the course of a formal investigation); or

(d) alleged that the discriminator or anyone else has committed an act which (whether or not this is expressly stated) would constitute a contravention of the Sex Discrimination Act or give rise to a claim under the Equal Pay Act.

s.4(2) However, where the conduct of the person victimised involves the making of an allegation, the less favourable treatment on account of the allegation is *not* victimisation for the purposes of the Act if the allegation was false and not made in good faith.

2.14 What is said at the end of paragraph 2.4 about direct sex discrimination applies also to victimisation: victimisation does not occur unless the ***reason*** why the person victimised was treated less favourably was one of the grounds set out in paragraph 2.13.

3 Discrimination in the employment field

Discrimination by employers

Scope of employment covered

s.6 **3.3** It is unlawful for an employer to discriminate in relation to
s.82(1) employment by him in Great Britain. 'Employment' is defined as employment under a contract of service or apprenticeship or a contract personally to execute any work or labour. This definition includes self-employed persons who contract to do work personally.

Discrimination in recruitment

s.6(1) **3.5** There are three ways in which it is unlawful for an employer to discriminate when recruiting employees:

(a) in the arrangements he makes for deciding who should be offered the job (e.g. in the instructions given to a personnel officer or to an employment agency). A person discriminated against does not need to have applied for a job in order to make a complaint about arrangements of this kind;

(b) in relation to any terms offered (e.g. in relation to pay or holidays).

s.8(3),(4) If an employer offers a job on terms which, if they were applied in practice, would be in breach of the Equal Pay Act, the offer is unlawful under the Sex Discrimination Act; and

(c) by refusing or deliberately omitting to offer a person employment (e.g. by rejecting an applicant or by deliberately avoiding consideration of an application).

Discrimination in the treatment of present employees

s.6(2) **3.6** It is unlawful for an employer to discriminate in the way he affords an employee access, or by refusing or deliberately omitting to afford access, to opportunities for promotion, transfer or training or to any other benefits, facilities or services. This covers the arrangements made for selection for promotion, transfer or training as well as the actual selection itself. It is also unlawful for an employer to discriminate by dismissing an employee or by treating her unfavourably in any other way. (A person who is dismissed may have a right not to be unfairly dismissed under the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1974. A guide to the unfair dismissal provisions of that Act may be obtained from any local employment office or jobcentre of the Employment Service Agency or unemployment benefit office of the Department of Employment.)

s.6(7) **3.7** If an employer provides his employees with any benefits, facilities or services where he also provides those benefits, facilities or services to the public, he will be subject to the provisions of the Act described in chapter 5 and complaints will be dealt with by the courts (see chapters 8 and 10), not by industrial tribunals. However, such complaints will be determined by industrial tribunals:

(a) where the provision to the public differs in a material respect from the provision to his employees (e.g. where a building society provides mortgages to its employees at a lower rate of interest than to the public);

(b) where the provision is regulated by an employee's contract of employment; or

(c) where the provision relates to training (including any form of education or instruction).

Exceptions

Private households and small firms

s.6(3) **3.9** Sex discrimination and discrimination against married persons (but not victimisation) by an employer are not unlawful in relation to his existing employees or potential employees where:

(a) the employment in question is for the purposes of a private household, or

(b) the employer, together with any associated employers of his, does not employ a total of more than five persons (including part-time employees but excluding persons employed for the purposes of a private household); if the employer has more than one establishment, it is the total of all his employees which determines whether the exception applies.

Pregnancy, childbirth, death and retirement

3.10 It is not unlawful under the Sex Discrimination Act for an employer to discriminate:

s.2(2) (a) by affording special treatment to women in connection with pregnancy or childbirth; and

s.6(4) (b) in the provision he makes in relation to death or retirement (e.g. in such provision in a pension scheme or in relation to the age at which he requires workers to retire).

Similarly, the Equal Pay Act does not extend to these matters, except that, from 6 April 1978, it will extend to equal access to occupational pension schemes so far as such access is required by the provisions of the Social Security Pensions Act 1975 which come into force on that date. (The equal access requirements of that Act are equal treatment for men and women in relation to conditions as to age and length of service for admission to a pension scheme and in relation to whether membership of the scheme is voluntary or obligatory.)

Genuine occupational qualification

s.7(1) **3.11** Sex discrimination (but not discrimination against married persons or victimisation) by an employer in recruiting for a job, or in providing opportunities for promotion or transfer to, or training for, a job is not unlawful where a person's sex is a ***genuine occupational qualification*** (*GOQ*) for the job. The criteria for determining whether a person's sex is a *GOQ* for a particular job are set out in detail in the Act and are explained below. The *GOQ* is not an automatic exception for general categories of jobs: in every case it will be necessary for the employer to show, if the exception is to be claimed, that the criteria set out apply to the particular job in question.

3.12 A person's sex is a *GOQ* for a job:

s.7(2)(*a*) (a) Where the essential nature of the job calls for a man (or woman) for reasons of physiology (excluding physical strength or stamina) – an example might be modelling clothes – or in dramatic performances or other entertainment for reasons of authenticity, so that in either case the essential nature of the job would be materially different if carried out by a person of the other sex.

s.7(2)(*b*) (b) Where considerations of decency or privacy require the job to be held by a man (or woman), either because it is likely to involve physical contact between the jobholder and men (or women) in circumstances where they might reasonably object to the jobholder being of the opposite sex; or because the jobholder is likely to work in the presence of people who are in a state of undress or are using sanitary facilities and who might reasonably object to the presence of a person of the opposite sex to themselves. It might be claimed, for example, that being a man was a *GOQ* by virtue of this provision for a job as a men's changing-room attendant.

s.7(2)(*c*) (c) Where the nature or location of the establishment makes it impracticable for the jobholder to live in premises other than those provided by the employer (e.g. if the job is on a ship or on a remote site) and the only available premises for persons doing that kind of job do not provide both separate sleeping accommodation for each sex, and sanitary facilities which can be used by one sex in privacy from the other. In such a case, the employer may discriminate by choosing for the job only persons of the same sex as those who are already living, or who normally live, in those premises. However, the exception does not apply if the employer could reasonably be expected either to equip the premises with the necessary separate sleeping accommodation and separate or private sanitary facilities, or to provide other premises, for a jobholder of the opposite sex.

s.7(2)(*d*) (d) Where the job is in a single-sex establishment (e.g. a single-sex hospital), or in a single-sex part of an establishment, for persons

requiring special care, supervision or attention and the essential character of that establishment, or the part of it within which the work is done, is such that it is reasonable to restrict the job to a person of the same sex as those for whom the establishment (or that part of it) exists. A single-sex institution which exceptionally admits persons of the other sex does not lose the right to claim the exception. However, the exception does not necessarily apply to all jobs in a single-sex establishment of the kind described: it will need to be shown in relation to any particular job that the character of the establishment requires *that job* to be held by a man (or by a woman).

s.7(2)(*e*) (e) Where the holder of the job provides individuals with personal services promoting their welfare or education, or similar personal services, and those services can most effectively be provided by a man (or a woman). For example, some women might respond best to help offered by a female welfare worker.

s.7(2)(*f*) (f) Where the job needs to be held by a man because of restrictions imposed by the laws regulating the employment of women. Factories legislation, for example, limits the times at which women may work in certain places. It may therefore be necessary for an employer to restrict to men certain jobs involving night work.

s.7(2)(*g*) (g) Where the job involves work outside the United Kingdom in a country whose laws or customs are such that the job can only be done, or can only be done effectively, by a man (or by a woman). For example, a job might involve driving a car, but it is to be performed in a country where women are forbidden to drive.

s.7(2)(*h*) (h) Where the job is one of two which are to be held by a married couple.

Relationship between the Sex Discrimination Act and the Equal Pay Act 1970

3.16 The Equal Pay Act 1970 provides for an individual woman (or man) to be treated not less favourably than a man (or woman) in the same employment in respect of pay and other terms of her contract of employment, where she is employed on the same work as he is, on work which is broadly similar or on work which has been given an equal value to a man's job under job evaluation. The Act also provides for the removal of discrimination from collective agreements, employers' pay structures and statutory wages orders.

3.18 The distinction between the two Acts is as follows:

(a) If the less favourable treatment relates to the payment of money which is regulated by a contract of employment, only the Equal Pay Act can apply.

(b) If the employee is treated less favourably than an employee of the other sex who is doing the same or broadly similar work, or whose work has been given an equal value under job evaluation, and the less favourable treatment relates to some matter which is regulated by the contract of employment of either of them, only the Equal Pay Act can apply.

(c) If the less favourable treatment relates to a matter which is not included in a contract (either expressly or by virtue of the Equal Pay Act), only the Sex Discrimination Act can apply.

(d) If the less favourable treatment relates to a matter (other than the payment of money) in a contract, and the comparison is with workers who are *not* doing the same or broadly similar work, or work which has been given an equal value under job evaluation, only the Sex Discrimination Act can apply.

(e) If the complaint relates to a matter (other than the payment of money) which is regulated by an employee's contract of employment, but is based on an allegation that an employee of the other sex *would* be treated more favourably in similar circumstances (i.e. it does not relate to the *actual* treatment of an existing employee of the other sex), only the Sex Discrimination Act can apply.

Discrimination by trade unions, employers' organisations, etc.

s.12(2),(3) **3.21** It is unlawful for any of the following bodies to discriminate in the terms on which it admits a person to membership; by refusing or deliberately omitting to accept an application for membership; in the way it affords members access to any benefits, facilities or services or by refusing or deliberately omitting to afford access to them; by depriving a person of membership; by varying the terms on which that person is a member; or by treating that person unfavourably in any other way.

s.12(1) The bodies are:

(a) an organisation of workers;

(b) an organisation of employers; and

(c) an organisation whose members carry on a particular profession or trade for the purpose of which the organisation exists.

Discrimination by vocational training bodies

s.14(1) **3.27** It is unlawful for the following vocational training bodies to discriminate against a person seeking, or undergoing, training which would help fit him or her for any employment, as regards terms of access to any training courses or other facilities; by refusing or deliberately omitting to afford access to them; or by terminating the training.

s.14(2) The bodies are:

(a) industrial training boards;

(b) the Manpower Services Commission and its two agencies, the Employment Service Agency and the Training Services Agency;

(c) group training associations of employers; and

(d) any other person who provides facilities for training for employment and who has been designated in an order made by or on behalf of the Secretary of State.

4 Discrimination in education

Discrimination by bodies in charge of educational establishments

s.22 **4.2** It is unlawful for the responsible body for an educational establishment (see paragraphs 4.3 and 4.4) to discriminate:

(a) as regards terms of admission to the establishment;

(b) by refusing or deliberately omitting to accept an application for admission;

(c) in the way it affords a pupil whom it has admitted to the establishment access to any benefits, facilities or services, or by refusing or deliberately omitting to afford such access; or

(d) by excluding such a pupil from the establishment or treating her unfavourably in any other way.

4.3 The categories of educational establishment (*and the corresponding responsible bodies*) in England and Wales to which the requirements described in the preceding paragraph apply are listed below:

*(1) educational establishments maintained by a local education authority (*the authority or the managers or governors of the establishment, as the case may be*);

(2) independent schools which are not special schools (*proprietors*);

*(3) special schools (e.g. for handicapped children) which are not maintained by a local education authority (*proprietors*);

(4) universities (*governing bodies*); and

(5) certain other establishments providing full- or part-time education which are designated in an order made by or on behalf of the Secretary of State (*governing bodies*).

6 Other unlawful acts and related matters

Discriminatory advertisements

s.38(1) **6.4** The Act makes it unlawful for a person to publish, or place for publication, an advertisement which indicates, or might reasonably be taken to indicate, an intention to do an act which is, or might be, s.38(2) unlawful discrimination. However, it is not unlawful to publish, or place for publication, an advertisement which might be taken to indicate an intention to do an unlawful act where the act itself would not in fact be unlawful (e.g. because it came within an exception). For example, an employer seeking persons for a job to which the genuine occupational qualification exception applies will not be acting unlawfully if he specifies in an advertisement that only men, or only women, as the case may be, will be considered.

s.38(3) **6.5** In addition, a job advertisement which uses a job description with a sexual connotation (e.g. 'waiter', 'salesgirl' or 'stewardess') is taken to indicate an intention to commit an unlawful discriminatory act unless the advertisement contains an indication to the contrary. This does not mean that such words may not lawfully be used in job advertisements; what it does mean is that, where they are used, the advertisement must make it clear that no discrimination is intended (e.g. by using job descriptions applying to both sexes ('waiter or waitress') or by saying specifically that the job is open to both men and women).

Instructions to discriminate

s.39 **6.7** The Act makes it unlawful for a person who has authority over, or influence with, another person (e.g. an employer over an employee or a company with one of its subsidiaries) to instruct that person to do an act of unlawful discrimination, or to procure or attempt to procure the doing of such an act by that person.

Pressure to discriminate

s.40 **6.8** It is unlawful for a person to bring pressure to bear on another person to do an act of unlawful discrimination. Bringing pressure to bear means providing or offering any benefit, or subjecting to, or threatening, any detriment; and an offer or a threat includes one which is not made directly to the person concerned but is made in such a way that he is likely to get to know of it.

APPENDIX 9.B

Samples of advertisements in the Singapore Straits Times on 21 and 22 July 1985. Note the sexist references to top and middle-level appointments in samples (a),(b) and (c) and low-level appointments in samples (d),(e) and (f).

Taiko Electronics (S) Pte Ltd

An established Electronics Company invites qualified candidates for the post of:-

Assistant Purchasing Manager

- Males with age 27 & above
- GCE 'A' Level/Diploma in Business Studies or equivalent
- Have 3 - 5 years' working experience in manufacturing sector
- Responsible for an effective operation in material procurement, inventory control and store scheduling
- Working knowledge of EDP an advantage

Interested applicants can write in giving full details of qualifications, experience, current and expected salary to:-

The Personnel Dept
Taiko Electronics (S) Pte Ltd
16 Kallang Place #03-28/36
Singapore 1233

not later than **1st August 1985**
Only shortlisted applicants will be notified

(a)

SEAGATE TECHNOLOGY

Our Company, the leading manufacturer of Winchester Disc Drives is expanding our Kallang factory. We have immediate vacancies for:

FEMALE PRODUCTION OPERATORS

- No experience required
- Minimum Primary 6 education
- Training will be provided

1st shift: 7.00am – 3.30pm
Gross Salary upon confirmation: $420

2nd shift: 3.30pm – 11.15pm
Gross Salary upon confirmation: $520

3rd shift: 11.15pm – 7.00am
Gross Salary upon confirmation: $570

(d)

Law firm requires:

MALE LEGAL ASSISTANT

with 3 years' experience.

Successful applicant can look forward to an attractive salary & opportunity to run his department independently.

Interested applicants, please contact:

Mr. Chew at 3371367

(c)

FEMALE RECEPTIONIST/ TYPIST

required for established international company.

Good salary and attractive benefits for right person.

Interview at:

Goldhill Centre,
165 Thomson Road

On Sat. (20/7), 9am to 1pm.

(e)

U.S. Multinational Company

Plant Superintendent

Around $65,000 plus car (Ref. 3555)

Our client is a well-established U.S.-based multinational engaged in the manufacture of precision tools and equipment for the energy-related industry. The company enjoys a commanding market position worldwide in its range of product lines and is continuously broadening and diversifying its technological leadership. The Singapore subsidiary which serves as the nucleus for the Asian-Pacific region, is in the process of upgrading its technology and widening the scope of its business activities.

The Plant Superintendent will be responsible for managing the day-to-day running of the plant in a systematic and efficient manner. He will take charge of planning, organising and controlling the entire manufacturing activities, including machine shop and maintenance. He will ensure that operating policies, procedures and standards are met adequately.

To perform well in this position, the incumbent should be a qualified engineer who has solid hands-on experience in heavy machine shop operations, with at least three years as a manager. He should be knowledgeable about CNC operated machines. He should possess strong leadership skills but at the same time be able to communicate well with people at all levels. He must have plenty of initiative and stamina and be prepared to get down to the production floor to solve problems himself as the need arises.

The appointee will likely be a Singapore citizen or permanent resident in his mid to late 30's. He will have a degree or diploma in mechanical, industrial or production engineering.

The position will appeal to a person who is already in a similar position in a medium-sized company or one who is second in command in a large machine-shop type company and feels he is now ready to move to the top position in a plant.

(b)

Printemps

Printemps Dept Store requires

SALES ASSISTANTS
(Female)

- Age 15 years and above.
- Min Sec. 2 education.
- Bilingual in English and Mandarin.
- Pleasant personality.

COUNTER CASHIERS
Female Only

- Age between 16 and 25 years.
- GCE 'O' level with credit in Mathematics.
- Bilingual in English and Mandarin.
- Training will be provided.

Call personally today and tomorrow at:

Printemps Dept. Store
100 Orchard Road
#01-01 Meridien Shopping Centre
Singapore 0923

(f)